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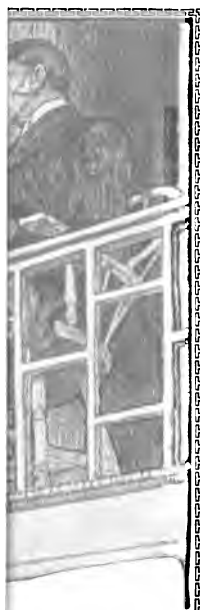
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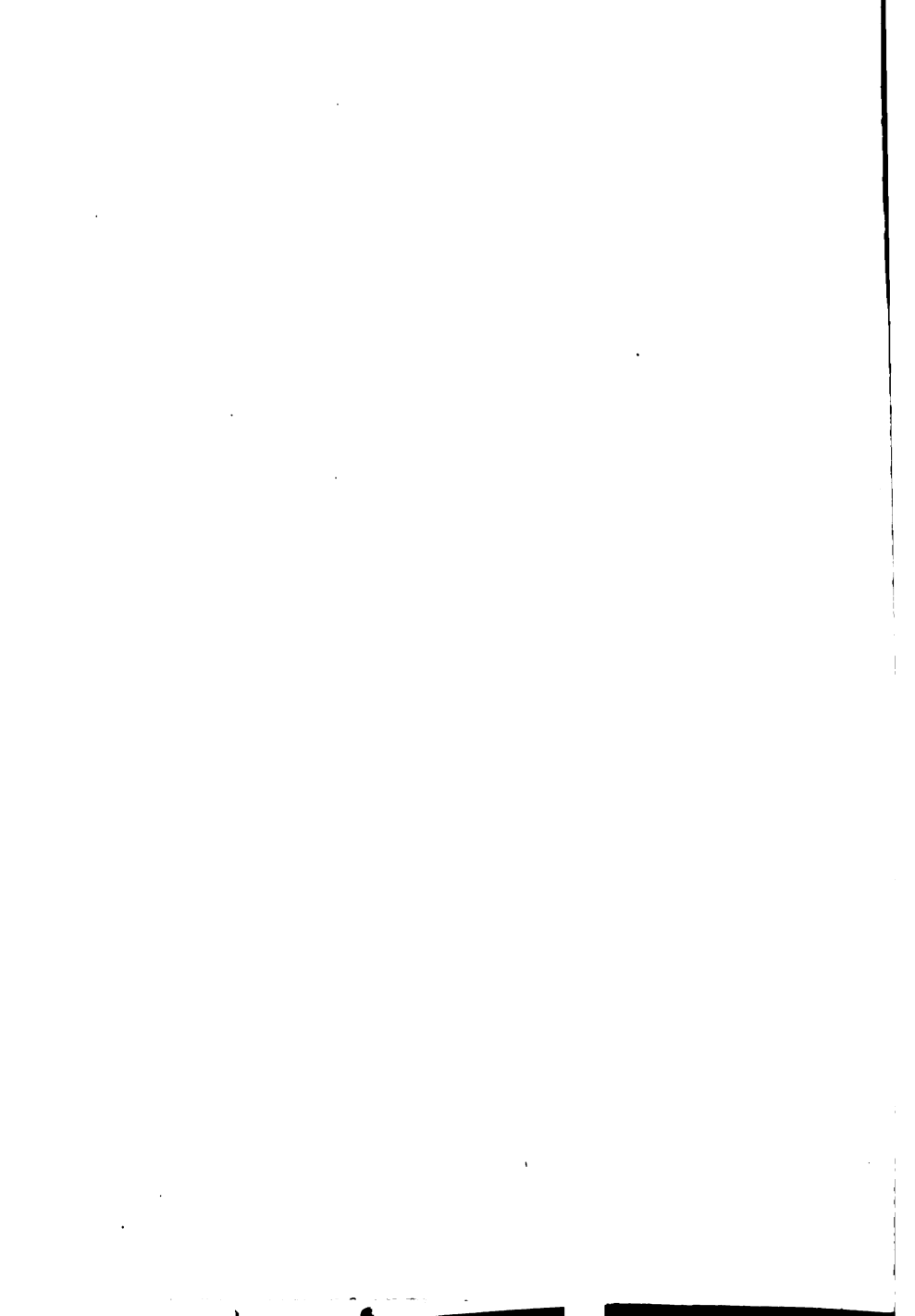


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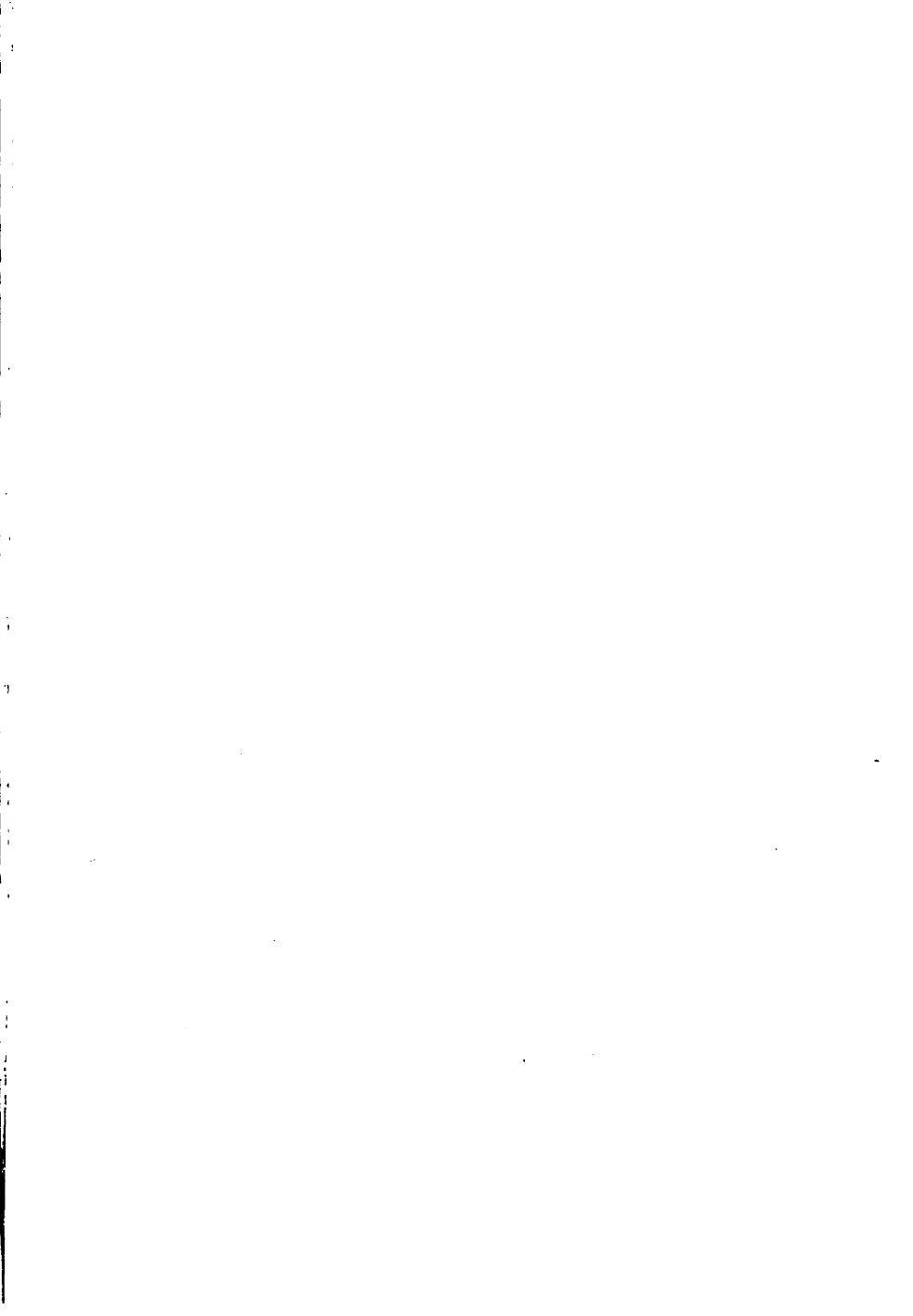


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THE
SLAVES OF
SUCCESS

By ELLIOTT PIERCE

Author of "The

MEMOIR OF
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ives of Success

SLAVES OF SUCCESS

By ELLIOTT FLOWER

Author of "The Spoilsmen," "Delightful Dodd," etc.

Illustrated by
JAY HAMBIDGE



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FOREWORD

In presenting this story the author desires to acknowledge the courtesy of the editors of *Collier's Weekly* and *The Saturday Evening Post*. Six of the chapters were originally published serially in the Fiction Numbers of *Collier's Weekly*, and one appeared, in somewhat different form, in *The Saturday Evening Post*. "The Cupidity of Carroll" is now published in its entirety for the first time. E. F.

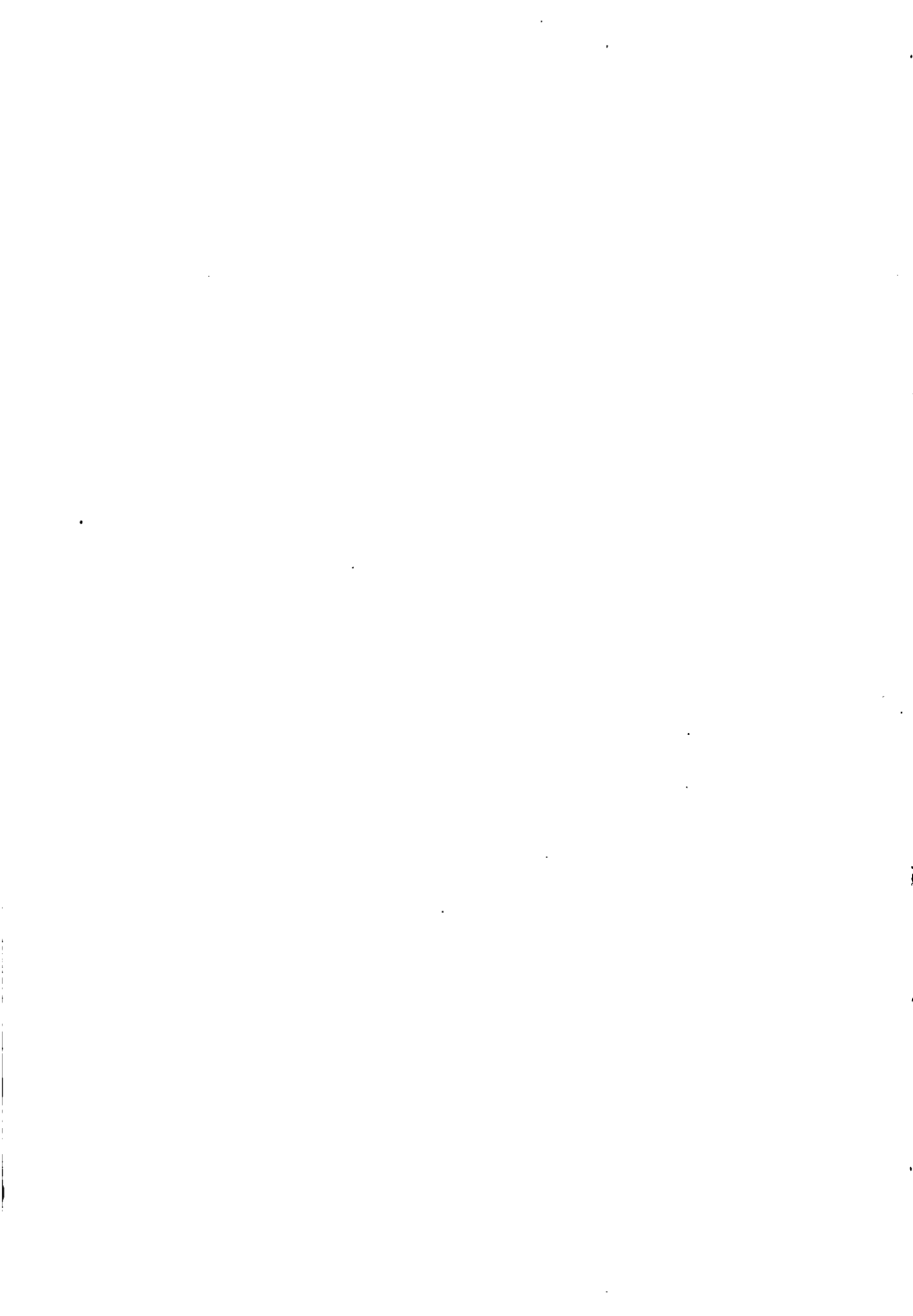
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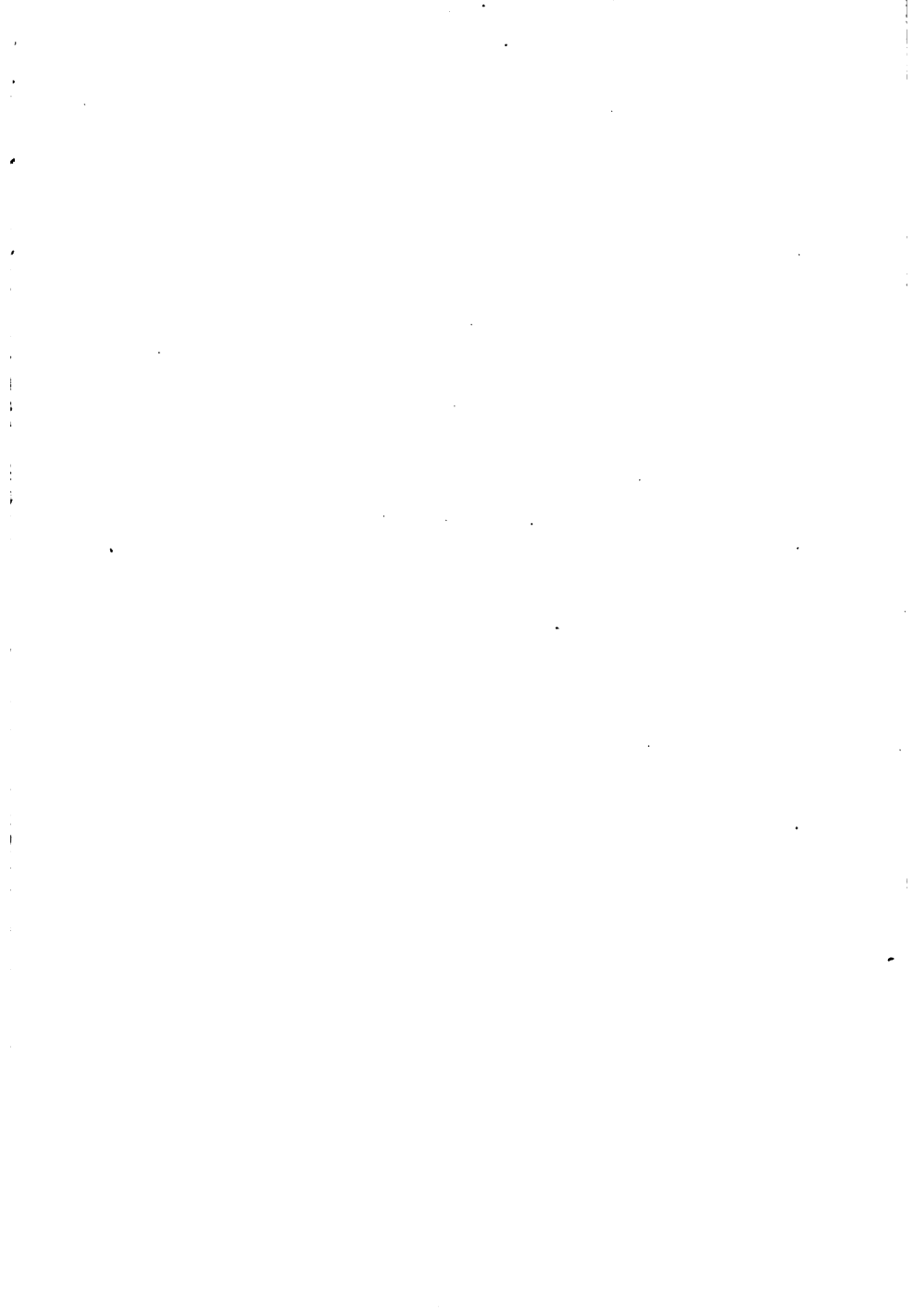
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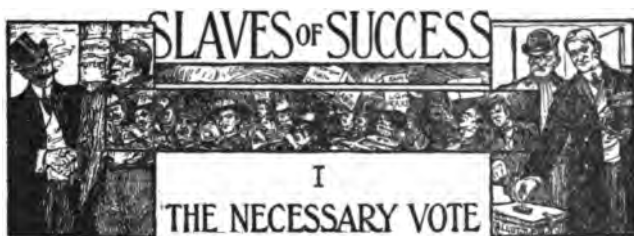
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THE day after Azro Craig was nominated for the Legislature he found himself surprisingly popular; three days later he wondered if people thought he was to be the whole Lower House. For Azro Craig was an unknown quantity politically, and therefore an object of solicitous interest to all those who sought legislative power. He had been nominated as a Republican, but there was little reason to believe that he would consent to wear the party collar. He was a guileless, hard-headed old fellow, with unlimited faith in his friends, but inclined to be obstinate and suspicious where faith was lacking. Consequently, he would not be an easy man to handle.

The nomination was a surprise to the politicians.

The "machine" had been back of Nagle, but the good people of this country district had wearied of the "machine." The word conveyed only a hazy idea to them, but the newspapers had taught them to attribute all that was evil in State politics to the few men who were popularly supposed to be at the head of it, so they had turned out in unexpected force at the primaries to put the stamp of their disapproval on Nagle. It naturally followed that they had put up a man who had as fierce a hatred of the "machine" as any of them, and quite as little practical knowledge of it. In this emergency certain prominent politicians began to wonder whether it would not be advisable to elect the Democratic candidate. The district was Republican by only a small majority, and a little quiet treachery would almost certainly change the result. Indeed, if the Democrats made an aggressive fight and the Republicans practically no fight at all, it was more than likely that the Democrats would win. Possibly a "deal" might be made that would be more advantageous than the election of an obstinate old mossback. Thus it happened that Azro Craig received more attention than it was customary to give a nominee in that district.

The first man to arrive on the scene, after the

neighbours had extended their congratulations and warned their candidate of the wiles of practical politics, was Tom Higbie, who had been sent by Ben Carroll, and there was an element of treachery here. It had been arranged that John Wade should go, for Wade had once lived in the district and knew the people, but Carroll was afraid that Wade might so arrange matters as to give himself more power, and he had enough already. Wade was politically unscrupulous, but personally honest — a combination sometimes found. This means that he was not a boodler himself, but that he was not above helping boodlers in order that he might use them politically. He would not offer a man money, but for a political price he would let him steal it from others or from the State. Carroll, on the other hand, used politics for his pecuniary advantage; with him power had a cash value, in addition to being personally gratifying. He liked to rule, but he played politics principally because it put him in the way of making money. At the present time he could not get along without Wade, and Wade could not get along without him. Their alliance was one of convenience, which either would terminate the moment he felt himself strong enough to do it.

So Carroll had put the case to his lieutenant, Higbie, in this form:

“Wade is going down there next week to look the ground over, but I don’t see why we can’t do the job first. The House is going to be pretty close, and I’d rather not have Wade in a position to dictate terms, as he may if he gets that yahoo on his staff. I want to make Mackin Speaker. Mackin is our man, and, with him in the chair, we can organize the House and make Wade keep in line in order to get any favours at all. He’ll have to stick to us. But the margin is so small that a very little may upset everything. He has a personal hold on some men now, and control of this yahoo is likely to give him a grip on some others of the same class — they stick together pretty closely now and then. If you can pledge Craig to Mackin, we’ll take chances on getting him when we need him after that; if you can’t, see what you can do with the Democrat, Rowley. We can’t use him on strictly party measures, but I’m told he can be reached on pretty nearly everything else, and a ‘handy’ Democrat is a whole lot more useful than a balky Republican, and won’t be as dangerous to our Speakership plan. And Wade isn’t going to like the Mackin idea at all. That’s why we’ve got to see that he doesn’t get

too much power. Do you understand the situation?"

"Perfectly."

"Well, make a smooth job of it, and, if Rowley looks like the best man for us, I'll see what kind of a deal can be made at this end of the line. The Democrats ought to be willing to concede us something if we put their man through in a Republican district. I wouldn't wonder if Hatton and Dailey would help us organize the House, in a pinch, just to turn down Wade. They know where our organization will be of advantage later. I'll see them if that seems to be the best thing to do."

With these instructions, which show how "machine" men of opposite parties can sometimes meet on the common ground of personal or pecuniary benefit, Higbie sought Craig and had a long talk with him. But Higbie was not a good man to handle Craig. There was something in his manner that suggested the schemer. He hinted at things that he did not explain, and he talked too much of being "with the party," and not enough of being conscientious. Perhaps his idea of conscientiousness was "being with the party." At any rate, his main argument was that they had to pull together or the Democrats would control.

"That ain't worryin' me," retorted Craig. "There's good Democrats an' there's bad Republicans. You kin count me ag'in the 'machine' on both sides."

Then Higbie tried to explain that the "machine" was merely the necessary party organization, which impractical reformers had maligned until they had made an opprobrious term of an innocent word, but Craig was obdurate. He did not believe in the "machine," and he would make no pledges whatever.

"All we want," said Higbie, "is to make sure that the House will be organized on a good Republican basis."

"You kin do that easy," returned Craig, "by doin' it right, but I ain't goin' to help organize on no 'machine' basis. When I git to Springfield I'll see how things is, an' act accordin'."

"You may not get to Springfield if you don't have the party behind you," suggested Higbie.

"Goin' to turn me down, are you?" exclaimed Craig, hotly. "Well, you go plump to thunder!"

"You misunderstand me," urged Higbie. "We'll support you, of course, but you'll stand better if there's no question as to your party loyalty."

"The folks here knows what I stand for, an' that's enough," asserted Craig, aggressively.

"Why not take a run up to Chicago and have a talk with the party leaders?" asked Higbie, seeing that he would be able to do nothing with the man alone. "That will give you an idea of the situation and of the need of harmony. Together we can rule, and you will be of real value to your district, but no one of us can do anything alone. We'll be glad to see you, and when you know the men I think you'll take a different view of things."

Craig said that he might do this, but Higbie already had given him up as an unsatisfactory proposition. It was advisable to treat him as cleverly as possible, so far as outward appearances went; but Rowley, the Democrat, might easily prove to be the better man for their purposes. Rowley had changed his party twice. Beginning as a Democrat, he had switched to the Republicans and then back to the Democrats. He was not a man to let a little matter like political affiliations interfere with his own interests, so he had changed whenever it had seemed to be to his advantage. The Democrats, although they had no great love for him, had nominated him as a matter of party expediency. He would draw some independent votes,

and he could be controlled by those who would need his services. Knowing this much about him, Higbie quietly arranged for a confidential chat.

Craig, suspicious, but unsophisticated, puzzled his head not a little over the significance of Higbie's visit. He had expected to meet and fight the "machine" at Springfield, but he had not expected that the people in Chicago would take such an immediate interest in him. It looked to him as if he were of more importance than he had supposed. This idea was strengthened by a call from a representative of a political reform organization that sought to do with the Legislature what the Municipal Voters' League had previously attempted, with reasonable success, to do with the Chicago City Council. It investigated the records of candidates and sought to pledge them in advance to certain principles of legislation, and to a line of action that would thwart the plans of the unscrupulous. Letters and circulars had come from the Chicago headquarters of this organization, but Craig was suspicious of all pledges, and he had ignored them. Nor did the agent impress him any more favourably than the letters and circulars. The agent seemed to look upon him with tolerant condescension. He was earnest, but there was an aloofness about him

that was aggravating. Somehow he gave the impression — quite unintentionally, of course — that he was a superior person. And Craig would have none of him. "I ain't signin' pledges nor makin' promises," said Craig.

"My dear sir," said the reformer, with lofty complacency, "I fear you do not understand. All we desire is to wrest the control of legislation from those who will use it unscrupulously. We realize that it would be folly to attempt to interfere with purely party measures, even though some of them may be questionable, but we hope to put an end to many forms of corruption. This task is more difficult in a State than in a city, for the party is more important, but there is no reason why it can't be done in time. With the aid of the honest independents, we can teach the politicians the importance of putting up good men. The independent voters turn against an objectionable party man every little while, so why not organize and concentrate that independent force with a view to compelling the parties to put up good men? To do that effectively, we must pledge the candidates and study their records. Now, you have no record —"

"You go to thunder!" roared Craig. "I got a

record of forty year in this one township, an' all the folks know I'm square. You git out! I ain't goin' to have nobody tellin' me what it's my duty to do, an' I ain't goin' to make a promise — not a darned one."

The air of the man exasperated Craig, and so it happened that he was labelled "Doubtful," although, as Rowley was designated "Bad," this did no particular harm. The reformer did not know how to handle him, but this was also true of all others — until Wade came. Wade was a better judge of men, and he had the advantage of knowing both Craig and the district, although it was all of ten years since he had seen either. Moreover, Craig had a sort of sneaking admiration for Wade. He had gone to the city and had become a big man, which was proof of his ability. True, he was identified with the "machine," but one could admire his success and still be reasonably cautious about succumbing to his influence. And Wade urged nothing. He was the same old Jack Wade of years ago.

"Great guns, Azro!" he cried, when he met the old man, "how did you do it?"

"I didn't do it," laughed Azro. "You folks up to Chicago did it by takin' so blamed much in-

t'rest in Nagle. You got him so plastered over with 'machine' tags that the people couldn't stand him. We ain't electin' men down here to represent a lot of you Chicago fellers, you know."

"That's right, too," Wade declared, heartily. "I told the boys to keep their hands off, but they wouldn't listen to me. Well, I'm glad you got it."

Much more did Wade say in the same line, and he talked politics with Craig for over an hour, but never once did he even suggest that he had the slightest interest in the old man's course of action. He advised nothing, argued for nothing, and asked no questions that could possibly arouse suspicion. But he learned all that he wished to know, which was that Craig would be "anti-machine" on everything.

"Ever been to Chicago, Azro?" he asked, finally.

"Once, twenty year ago," replied Craig.

"Why don't you run up some day? You know I'm always glad to see you. Just go right to the house and make yourself at home."

So far as possible, Wade was clever to every one. "You never can tell when you may need a man," was the way he put it, "so the more you have on your staff the better you are fixed for emergencies." He had decided that Craig would

be "worse than a Democrat," but that was no reason why he should not hold his friendship, if he could. He had not the same use for Rowley that Carroll had, but a good hold on Rowley would have its advantages, and a strong "anti-machine" Republican would be an absolute menace. Furthermore, it was policy to let Carroll have his way in this matter, and Carroll wanted a spoilsman. Wade could strengthen his own hold on the party machinery by giving this spoilsman to those who had need of him, at the same time escaping a political danger. For he felt that there was danger in this intractable old man, with his intense hatred of "machine" politics.

A secret conference with Rowley was as important in Wade's case as it had been in Higbie's, for public knowledge of it would create comment and arouse suspicion. But to the suggestion that such a conference be arranged he received a most startling reply.

"Mr. Rowley says it would be a risk that is unnecessary," the go-between reported. "He already has seen Higbie, and it's all right."

"Seen Higbie," mused Wade, when he was alone. "Why has Higbie been here when the job was left to me?"

He had no need to ask the question of himself, for the answer was framed in his mind before it was really asked. It was Carroll's work. Carroll wanted this man for himself; he wanted him for certain "jobs" that would follow the organization of the House, and he did not wish to pay a political price for him to any one else. He was strengthening himself — preparing, so far as possible, to "go it alone."

"That means trouble," commented Wade. "If I don't watch out I'll be on a side-track somewhere. I wonder if he saw Craig."

A delay of a day or two and another casual meeting with the old farmer gave him the information he desired on this point. Higbie had seen Craig, had failed to pledge him, and had asked him to come to Chicago. Wade quickly saw that Higbie had made an unfavourable impression, and another man in his place would have told the old man of the contemplated treachery. But Wade deemed it wisdom to let that information come later, and, if possible, through some other source.

"He's got to be handled carefully," he said. "He'd look to see where I was interested, and he'd find out. Then I'd be losing, instead of gaining, his confidence."

Wade went back to Chicago and called together a few of his personal followers, with whom he went over the situation carefully. According to indications, he might or might not have considerable strength in the Legislature. Some he might properly call "his men," but there were others whose loyalty would depend largely on the showing he was able to make; they favoured him, but favoured themselves more, and would not hesitate to ally themselves with a stronger combination. If Carroll could get these, he might easily control, and there was no doubt that Carroll was seeking to make himself the absolute dictator.

"I wish I could get a grip on that hayseed," he muttered. "He may be the key to the situation. How the devil can I make him my friend?"

He wrote to him, making certain wise suggestions for the campaign, and he exerted his own influence in his behalf. He even sent one of his followers down there to do a little quiet work, for he considered Rowley quite out of the question now. He began to hear talk of Mackin for Speaker, too, and his first impulse was to notify Carroll that this was equivalent to a declaration of war, but he thought better of it. With Mackin in the chair, Carroll would rule, and Carroll must be pretty sure

of his ground or he never would have dared risk the opposition that this plan would arouse. All in all, it was better to meet this trickster on his own ground of strategy and duplicity.

It was about a week after this — a week devoted to investigation and hard work, during which men had been sent to various parts of the State to weld what promised to be a faction of the "machine" more closely together, and to see what could be done to add to its numerical strength — that Wade found Craig sitting on his doorstep, and it took all his self-control to withhold an exclamation of astonishment and protest. Craig had come to the city as a result of the many invitations to do so — some extended as a mere matter of form, and some in the hope that he would really come, for even those contemplating treachery were anxious to keep on the right side of him temporarily. He had prepared for the trip by donning "store clothes," which did not fit, and a pair of new boots, which hurt. The city pavements troubled him, and his feet were painfully sore when he appeared at the door of Wade's home.

"Jack Wade live here?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Mrs. Wade, who had happened to come to the door herself.

"I'm Craig — Azro Craig," the old man explained. "He told me to come here an' make myself to home."

Mrs. Wade, being the wife of a politician, had become accustomed to all sorts of queer characters; so she assured Craig that her husband would return soon, and asked him to come in.

"Reckon I better wait here," returned Craig. "It's so darned close indoors."

As he held to this determination, he was left on the steps, where he amused himself by making a careful survey of the exterior of the house. To do this the better he crossed the street and sat on the opposite curb.

"An' Jack Wade didn't use to have no better home than I got," he muttered. "By gum! he's a smart feller, an' I'm darned if I ain't proud of him." Then, after another survey of the house, "An' that there belongs to Jack Wade, that was my friend down to the farm, an' he acts like he was the same old Jack Wade, too."

He wandered back to the steps, sat down, and pulled off his boots to ease his feet. The home-made knit socks, with conical toes, stuck out like a pair of submarine boats, and these caught Wade's attention the first thing; but, as recorded,



"HE . . . PULLED OFF HIS BOOTS TO EASE HIS FEET"

he restrained the exclamation that sprang to his lips.

"Tryin' to ease my hoofs," explained the old man, "but I won't do it in the parlour nor at meal times, so don't you worry."

"Oh, that's all right, Azro," returned Wade, genially. "It's you and not your boots that we're glad to see. Come up to my den and we'll have a talk."

The old man followed, carrying his boots, much to the astonishment and dismay of Mrs. Wade, and presently was comfortably settled in a big chair in the room that Wade had reserved for his own use, while the boots rested on a table. While this was distressing to Wade, it happened to be, in this instance, a minor detail of the game of politics — and he is a short-sighted politician who sees only the things that have a direct bearing on the game. The theoretical politician would bring all to his standard of life; the practical makes some concessions to theirs.

"Say, Jack!" remarked Craig, when he was comfortably settled, "what's the matter with them reform fellers?"

"Why do you ask?" inquired Wade.

"Well, I was up to see 'em," explained Craig.

"They wrote, askin' me to come, so I come; but it looks like they think their brand's the only thing that makes a feller good. The way they talked you'd think there wasn't any virtue anywhere, only what's got their stamp on it. Why, they pretty near had me wild — not owin' to what they said so much as the way they said it. Who made them the boss of me, anyhow? Just 'cause they're leanin' away from evil so hard that they're fallin' over backwards, ain't no sign that they're the only good people there is. They aggravate me, that's what they do. They act like I was a poor suff'rin' sinner, that ought to give thanks for a chance to git in the glory of their smiles."

"Did you sign their pledge?" asked Wade, quite casually.

"Sign nothin'!" exclaimed Craig. "They ain't my kind; they're 'way off somewheres, an' I don't seem to git close to 'em. Looked like they had an idee they was so big an' good an' wise that folks ought to do what they said jest 'cause they said it. A feller can see that they're sort of lookin' down on him, even when they talk nice; they ain't sociable."

"Oh, they are not so bad," said Wade, magnanimously.

"Ain't they ag'in you?" asked Craig.

"They have opposed me in some ways," explained Wade, "but they mean well."

"By gum, Jack! folks has lied about you," asserted Craig, admiringly. "I was lookin' to have you tell me those fellers was the meanest skunks livin', like Higbie did."

"Have you seen Higbie?"

"Yep. Went to the headquarters where he hangs out, an' when I told him how these reform folks looked to me, he couldn't talk mean enough — said they was all lookin' out for the best of it, an' was reg'lar hypocrites."

"That's not so," said Wade, promptly. "They're doing the best they know how, according to their ideas, but they're narrow-minded, and they can't get down to the level of the people."

"Darn me if you ain't better'n all of 'em, Jack!" cried the old man. "You're the only one that's talked anyways decent about the others. Why, they said you was workin' to be, or to own, a United States Senator, an' didn't give a hang what happened s'long as you could run the 'machine' while you was doin' that."

"That only shows their egotism and narrow-mindedness," remarked Wade, carelessly, although the statement was dangerously near the truth.

“An’ they seemed to think all I wanted was lick an’ se-gars an’ some fun,” Craig went on, with some indignation. “Kept tellin’ me to drop in whenever I wanted an’ help myself, an’ I heard Higbie say to ‘take that old billy-goat down an’ make him think he was livin’ high by openin’ a bottle of champagne.’ Carroll talked nice, but he was always showin’ me how I could git good things on the committees by bein’ with the party. ‘We take care of our people,’ he said. I tell you, Jack, it looked like they thought I was jest graftin’, an’ I could see some of ’em was laughin’ at me, too. They ain’t my kind, Jack; they got too much idee of everybody watchin’ to gain somethin’ for himself; I wouldn’t trust ’em. Fact is, I heard when I was leavin’ home that they was dickerin’ with the Democrats.”

“It’s possible,” admitted Wade, non-committally, “but I would hesitate to believe it without some evidence.”

“Jack, you’re white,” asserted the old man, impulsively leaning forward to take his hand, “an’ you’re the only white man I’ve seen in Chicago. All the rest of ’em is doin’ dirt an’ talkin’ dirt one way or another.”

Wade, knowing his man, had got the grip on him

that others had failed to get, and that is the secret of successful practical politics. Some men know how to do it one way and some know how to do it another, but the true politician has no hard and fast rule. He gauges his man, and acts accordingly. For the first time, Craig felt that he had a generous political friend; all others sought to be his political masters, either by purchase or by right of birth and commercial standing.

Wade saw his advantage, and made the most of it. He insisted that the old man should remain two or three days; he introduced him to his wife and children, who gave him cordial greeting, and treated him as a welcome friend; he invited a few friends in to dinner, expressly stipulating that there should be no dress suits, and the friends were diplomatic and clever. One among them was a business man of some prominence, and he reciprocated by giving a stag dinner at his club. How Wade arranged for this, it is unnecessary to state; let it be sufficient to say that the man was an intimate friend who would do much for Wade, and who rather enjoyed the old man's breezy comment and rustic simplicity, anyway.

"But they'll all be wearin' spike-tails there," protested Craig. "Don't believe I better go."

"Nonsense," returned Wade, "I won't wear one, so there'll be two of us, anyway."

That dinner was worth more than weeks of argument and explanation. There were men there whose names Craig had seen in the papers, and they were not politicians, so he felt reasonably sure that friendship and not politics was at the bottom of it. There was a freshness and sincerity about him that made them like him, too, and he was flattered to find himself among such men. Here were successful men, big men, and he was one of them; he was seeing something of real city life — not the features that are provided for every stranger who has the price, but the real thing. He forgot about his clothes, and talked freely. It was an experience that he could and would treasure.

And all this was part of the game of politics, as played by an astute man. Carroll would have done as much, if he had had the wisdom; but the reformers would have thought it more than should be expected of them. With them, politics is too often a thing apart, to be taken up during the spare time that they can give to it, and then put aside: they would not take it into their business or their homes. With the practical politicians it is of first importance everywhere, and at all times. And

somehow the practical politicians seem to have the best of it when the test comes.

Craig returned home, singing the praises of Wade. There was nothing of envy in the old man's heart; he was glad to see a man from his district do so well in the city — this was local pride — and he was glad to find him so good a man, and so companionable and democratic in his ways.

"He ain't swelled up a bit," he said. "He's jest as glad to see his old friends as he ever was, an' it ain't politics, either. It's friendship; that's what it is. We talked politics in a friendly way, but that's all, an' there wasn't nothin' *but* politics to the other fellers; they jest wanted to 'fix' you one way or another, an' then have you mosey along — nothin' real, you know. I tell you, folks has lied about Jack Wade."

Craig learned, too, that his election, which followed later, was partly due to Wade's efforts — Wade saw to it that he should learn this in a round-about way — and that there had been treachery in other quarters. He verified, sufficiently for his purpose, the story that he had heard before leaving for Chicago. After that he was Wade's man.

Carroll knew this, and he redoubled his efforts in other quarters, but so did Wade. It was an out-

and-out fight for control of the party machinery now; one or the other would have to rule, and the weaker would have to make the best terms he could with the victor when the test came. After all, according to Carroll, Craig was only one man, but there could be no doubt that Wade knew how to make the most of the man.

Thus matters stood when the scene was transferred to Springfield just previous to the opening of the session. Wade had put forward Henry Wellington as a candidate for Speaker, and Craig had accepted him without question.

"Perhaps he isn't the very best man," Wade explained, "but he is the most available one for our purpose. He's certainly better than Mackin, who would be the tool of Carroll and Higbie, and would make up the committees in accordance with the wishes of the boodlers. It's a very simple thing for the Speaker to make graft easy or difficult — a little juggling with one or two committees will do it. I know how to prevent this, and some of the independents and country members ought to be willing to help me. Talk it up a little, Azro. It's the chance of a lifetime to beat the 'machine.'"

Craig did talk it up a little in his blunt way, and his talk was reasonably effective. There is always

an undercurrent of opposition to the "machine," especially among the country members, but it is too often weak and vacillating. Men fear that open opposition will destroy their usefulness to their districts, and many of them fear to be called traitors to the party if they interfere with what seem to be the party plans. But here was a chance to win. True, it was only a split in the "machine," but why not make the most of it? Why not give their strength to the faction that was the least objectionable, if only to overthrow the other?

Thus Craig argued, and Craig was known to be as fierce an anti-"machine" man as any of them. Thus, also, Wade argued with the leaders of the reform element. It was their chance, he said, to accomplish something — not so much as they might wish, perhaps, but still enough to materially improve conditions. They were not strong enough to force the selection of a man of their choice on either party, and when the vote came their men would divide on party lines. The Speakership was a party question, with which the pledges they held had nothing to do, but they could exert considerable influence. Their aim was honest legislation, aside from purely political matters, and here was the opportunity to lay an honest foundation that would

be of incalculable value later, for the mere knowledge that they favoured the defeat of Mackin would turn some Republican votes to Wellington.

"Give me an interview for publication at the proper time," Wade said to the secretary of the organization. "You may carefully explain that you are speaking personally, and not in your official capacity, that the pledges exacted have nothing to do with purely party questions, but that it seems to you, as an individual, a grievous mistake to give control of the House to the spoilsmen. That's all I ask, and you know how important it is to you that Carroll shall not rule.

The secretary knew that Wade was a politician, but not a boodler. There could be no doubt that he had his own ends to serve, but he was infinitely preferable to Carroll; so, after some hesitation, he agreed to the plan.

Still, the battle was far from won. Neither side could be sure of a clear majority in a party caucus, but Wade knew that Carroll's game was blocked, and he decided that the time had come to make the really important move. He sought Carroll, to put the case to him bluntly.

"Your man can't win in a thousand years," he said. "There is no possible combination of cir-

cumstances that can give him the full Republican vote. The hayseed contingent, that my friend Craig has rounded up, wouldn't vote for Mackin if he was the last man on earth, but you can deliver your votes to Wellington. I can hold mine, but I can't deliver them."

"A deuce of a nice job you've made of it, haven't you?" growled Carroll.

"Just cut that out," retorted Wade, sharply. "You tried to 'do' me and I had to protect myself. I've done it, I guess. At any rate, I've got the opposition all under one banner, and they'll fight Mackin to the last ditch. Some of them won't even be bound by caucus rule. I've shown them a chance to win, and they're bitter. If it comes to a fight, they'll force a compromise that won't do you a bit of good. And you're weaker than you think you are. Look here!" Wade pulled a carbon copy of the interview he had secured from his pocket, and handed it to Carroll. "Will the publication of that help you to organize the House?" he asked. "You're having trouble holding some men in line now. They don't like you, they don't like what you stand for, but in a Speakership fight they want to be with the party. All they want is an excuse to break away — just an intimation that you're not

so much of the party as you claim to be. I tell you, Carroll, you're up against a stone wall, and I built the wall."

"But I can beat you!" exclaimed Carroll. "If I have to turn down Mackin, I can swing to a man who will suit your highly moral bunch a whole lot better than Wellington does."

"But you won't," said Wade, with an unpleasant smile. "You won't, because you couldn't make the terms that you can with me. You won't, because such a man wouldn't let you control a single important committee, and Wellington will. You won't, because I need you, and the reformers and hayseeds don't. If I need you, I've got to look out for you a little."

"What are you after?" asked Carroll, suspiciously.

"Nothing much this session, but," meaningly, "at the next we elect a United States Senator. The wise man looks ahead, and control now can be used to make greater strength then, especially if a fellow has a check on the wise boys who are avaricious. I am looking for power, Carroll; that's all. If it has to be bought, I know how to buy it. You can name the two best committees — any two that you may select, barring only those that I need

for political purposes. I'll concede that much, Carroll, but no more. You see, I can't trust you — I need you, but I've got to have a check on you to hold you in line. I may decide to go to the Senate myself."

Carroll scowled, but he knew that Wade had him in a corner. His man was already beaten, apparently. By making a fight he might drag Wade down to defeat with him and force the selection of a man that neither could control, but he would gain nothing, while there would be excellent "commercial" opportunities in the control of two strong committees, especially when he could rely on certain Democrats in all but strictly party questions. Still, he was not prepared to surrender without making one last desperate effort, so he merely agreed to consider the matter.

"If I could only win that hayseed," he muttered, "I could break him yet. Confound it! he's as much the 'machine' as I am. Why can't the yahoo be made to see it? If he broke away, it would split that little bunch of country members, and the whole thing would go to pieces."

But the yahoo was blind and deaf. Three different men, Carroll himself being the last, tried to show him that he was being used for "machine"

purposes, that he was aiding the worst "machine" ever known in the State — a "machine" that was for a man and not for a party. Craig would not argue the question; he simply made a statement in his blunt way.

"Wade's my friend," he said, simply. "You all been clever to my vote, but he was clever to me. Them reformers took me by the nose an' tried to lead me, but he took me by the arm an' it was jest man an' man goin' together. Why, he left off his spiketail coat at a swell dinner so's to be with me, while you was tryin' to sell me out an' put in a Democrat. He's my friend, I tell you — *my* friend, not my vote's friend, an' I know he's all right."

Then Carroll surrendered. "It's all up," he told Higbie. "Pass the word to Mackin that he's got to draw out at the last minute, but that he's fixed for a committee chairmanship. Wellington is to be Speaker. That hayseed — just one vote — has done the business."

Something of this was rumoured in other circles, and many people, knowing nothing of the finer points of practical politics, wondered and speculated.

"Isn't it marvellous," they said, "the way Wade gets hold of people?"

II.

THE REFORMER REFORMED

THERE could be no doubt that political reformation was needed in many quarters, but it took some time to convince Leroy N. Marshall, of L. N. Marshall & Co., that he was personally interested in securing it. Mr. Marshall was very much of a business man. In a Presidential campaign he might sit on the platform with the speakers, but in any campaign of less importance he had time only to be interviewed occasionally. True, these interviews had the right ring to them, and really ought to have made the spoilsmen squirm, but somehow they seemed to be forgotten the day after they were published. Once he wrote a letter on the "Duties of Citizenship" that was a masterly presentation of the facts and a bitter arraignment of the spoils methods. It was published in all the papers, and created a mild sensation, but when the smoke cleared away Mr. Marshall was discovered so busy at his desk that he had really forgotten all about

it. And the spoilsmen were quite as busy in their peculiar way. That he contributed regularly to the expense funds of two reform organizations did not in the least worry the practical politicians, so long as he did nothing more.

But one day Leroy N. Marshall waked up — or perhaps it would be better to say that he was awakened — and it naturally happened at a most inopportune time. He became interested in a county election. Others besides county officials were to be chosen, but it seemed to him that the country was what most needed saving at that particular moment. This was exceptionally annoying, because he might have dabbled in other branches of politics without doing any particular harm. But it so happened that Ben Carroll and John Wade had unusual need of the county patronage at that time, and Ben Carroll and John Wade always pulled together when they were afraid to pull apart. They always wanted the county patronage, too, but they wanted it more than ever now, for certain plans relating to the Legislature were involved in it. A man who knows how can do much with even a small slice of the county patronage. It may not be as valuable as it was before the days of civil service, but it gives one a grip on the party machin-

ery and — well, it is distinctly worth having. A man may know where there is a picket loose in the civil service fence, or he may control some of the personal appointments of the men he puts on the ticket, or he may merely want the political influence of an office and its incumbent. His ambitions and his direct personal interests may lie beyond the county, and it may still be of prime importance that he shall have some of his own men in the county offices, if only to enable him to “take care of his friends” or to make certain essential “deals.” So Carroll and Wade would always want the county, but now they had to have it.

And Leroy N. Marshall showed a disposition to fight them — Marshall, the merchant, the theoretical reformer, the self-satisfied talker, the newspaper prominent citizen, the man who pointed to civic duty and then forgot about it. The politicians thought there must be some mistake and were disposed to treat the matter lightly.

“Probably a dull season in business,” one of them remarked, “and he wants something to occupy his mind for a few days.”

But Marshall was very much in earnest. He had seen the error of his ways. In conversation with Paul Stafford and others at the club, he had

ventured to preach a little on the duties of citizenship, advancing many of the excellent precepts that he had previously incorporated in his letter on the same subject. There could be no doubt that he knew just what a good citizen should do to secure the best results politically.

"Why don't you do that yourself?" asked Stafford. "Your advice is splendid, but you don't follow it. When you're through talking you go back to your desk, leaving the politicians to run things, and yet you yourself say that nothing can be accomplished that way."

"But my business," urged Marshall.

"Of course," laughed Stafford. "That's the old story. Some other fellow can neglect his business to improve political conditions for us all, but you can't."

"Will *you*?" asked Marshall, turning on Stafford.

"I'll do as much as you will," was the reply. "I haven't done as much preaching as you have, and I don't pretend to be as well posted on the subject, but I'll follow as long as you'll lead. And you couldn't have a better chance, for the 'machine' wants its own men on the ticket this fall."

"I'll think about it," said Marshall.

He did think about it, and he spoke about it to others. All promised their tacit support to any movement to remedy matters, but none cared to give much personal time to it. This in itself had the effect of stirring his fighting blood. Their very lukewarmness, when it came to a question of individual effort, aroused him, even though he had been guilty of the same offence, and he "read the riot act" to some of them.

"If I go into this," he said, "you've got to help, and I'm going in. You're as tired of 'machine' rule as I am; you know as well as I do what it means; you have said as harsh things as I have of the men who are slated for office, and you've got to get your coats off and work. I tell you, I'll have you on the platform and at the primaries, and you might as well make up your mind to it."

That was Marshall! If the men with whom he talked had expressed a readiness to work, he would have passed the leadership over to some one else, if he could have done so gracefully. As it was, he would really lead himself; he would make these men act the part of good citizens. Moreover, he would hold Stafford to his promise. It was Stafford's taunt that had awakened him and put him in a position where he had to do something to show

his sincerity, and Stafford would have to join him. He had hoped to escape leadership after talking the matter up, but he would not shirk it. The stand taken by the others only made him the more aggressive.

"Stafford," he said, "you might as well get ready to hustle. I didn't want to go into this thing — I really can't spare the time — but I've got to do it. To speak plainly, it makes me hot to see how easy-going our good citizens are. Every man I've talked to has added to my disgust and made me the more determined to stir things up. I'm going to make them work for good government; I can do it with your help."

"I'm with you," said Stafford, briefly. "What's the plan?"

"Well, the usual mistake of reformers is that they get into the field too late — after the 'machine' has things pretty well arranged. We'll begin early. Another common mistake is that they try to do too much. We'll avoid that. Instead of trying to make the whole ticket conform to our ideas, we'll confine ourselves to one or two offices — say County Treasurer and Sheriff. That's where the strength of the 'machine' lies; there's where the patronage is. We already know that Wade and Carroll want

to put Henry Warren in as County Treasurer, and we know why. He's their man — honest enough, but their man. They'll designate the banks that are to hold the county funds, and there's an element of influence and strength in that. For Sheriff they want Herman Sieling, who is also their man. The patronage of that office is a big thing. If they get it, they can have things pretty much their own way; if they don't get it, we will have wrested much of their power from them and will be in a position to do more at the next election. We must fight Warren and Sieling; we must put forward two good men, stir up public sentiment, make a hot campaign at the primaries and a hotter one on the floor of the convention. The Republican party of this city, county, and State, is tired of boss rule, and an aggressive fight will bring to our support the men who usually do little or nothing, but can do a great deal. I'll appoint a committee of men whose names will carry weight, and I'll make them serve on it — a committee small enough not to be unwieldy, but big enough to do the work. You will be secretary of that committee. Likewise, you will take hold of such of the members as are your personal friends and see that they don't shirk the work."

Carroll, Wade, and the other "machine" leaders

heard vague rumours of this movement, but gave them little attention at first.

"It will die out," they said. "There's not enough to it."

A citizens' meeting was called and there were many forceful speeches, but still they were not worried.

"A little relief from the ennui of a routine business life," they said. "Two or three men are doing it all, anyway, and they'll get tired in a day or so."

But Marshall was not a man to get tired. He had a vast amount of energy when he was once roused to action, and opposition only added to his determination. He was accustomed to success. So long as it was another man's fight, he might be lukewarm, but he had made this his fight, and victory was necessary to his personal pride. He gave the campaign the same earnest, painstaking attention that he ordinarily gave his private business; he put all his ability and all his influence into the movement; he laboured as earnestly with other business men as he would to put through an important business deal. And the results began to show.

"I tell you," said Tom Higbie to Carroll, "you've got to look out for this thing. Marshall

doesn't know much about the game, but he's a worker from the ground up, and he's got the material to work with in this case. There is a lot of unorganized dissatisfaction in the party that only needs to be organized to be dangerous. Do you know what he's done?"

"What?" asked Carroll.

"Well, he has arbitrarily put some big men on his committee, and he is making them work — men who never have turned a hair in politics before. He has read the riot act to them as no one else could, refused to accept any excuses, and insisted upon having a share of their time for active work. They are reporting at his meetings like so many school-boys who are afraid to play truant."

"Oh, they'll resent his dictation after a little," returned Carroll. "These reformers always begin to play at cross-purposes in time, for each one usually has his own ideas as to methods and candidates. Marshall will try to put up some particular man and they'll split."

"Now, see here, Carroll," retorted Higbie, "you're taking this too easy, and you're going to get left. Marshall is no fool. He has gathered in some men who know politics, and who would like nothing better than to turn us down. Don't

forget that. In one of his speeches he said: 'When I add a new department to my business, I get the services of some experts in that particular line, and so do you. We're adding a political department now, and we've got to leave much of the detail to political experts that we can trust.' Now, that's practical business and practical politics, Carroll, and it means trouble for us. Another thing he said was that he did not wish to put forward any particular man or men, but wished the selection made after a full discussion with all that the members of the committee could reach. They're reaching for all the people they can get; they're asking for suggestions and advice; they're discussing the matter generally and getting others to discuss it. That's a new way of doing things, but it's a good way — for them. When people talk they get interested; when they feel that they have influence that counts for something they get more deeply interested, and there are a whole lot of people doing some thinking in this matter who never before believed they had time to think of politics. Don't forget that, Carroll. He is an aggressive force that counts — and he has wisdom. He is making these people feel the responsibility of selecting candidates, and that means that he is giving them a personal interest

in the fight. They're beginning to feel that they're 'it.' I tell you, we've got to look out for them, Carroll."

Higbie was a man who usually acted on orders, leaving Carroll to do most of the thinking, and the fact that he spoke out plainly now was evidence that he considered the situation critical. Carroll realized this. To Higbie had been assigned the duty of following this feature of the campaign, and in consequence he was better posted on it than any one else. Carroll also knew that the conditions were right for serious trouble, capable and energetic leadership being all that was necessary to crystallize opposition to the "machine" dictation. His confidence had been based on his belief that this leadership would be lacking, but this report indicated real danger.

"I tell you," Higbie added, "Marshall's method is something new in politics, but he'll get those people to unite on some strong man or men, and he'll have every one of them personally interested. You've got to reckon with a man of force and influence."

"We'll talk it over with Wade," said Carroll.

Wade was more ingenious and resourceful than either of the other two. Carroll was a man of brute

force, Wade of strategy. Carroll could deal with the rougher element of politics, but it took Wade to make the fine points. Carroll understood men of his own class, and could rule them; Wade understood men of all classes, and knew how to reach them. In a word, Carroll was a spoilsman, Wade a politician.

"The whole thing," said Wade, "hinges on Marshall. Without him, the movement would go to pieces. He is the cohesive force. I happen to know that old Hobbins refused to do more than allow the use of his name until Marshall got after him. Then he suddenly lost his indifference, agreed to serve on the committee, speak at the big meeting and stir up his ward, and he's got a whole lot of people in action now. If Marshall did that with Hobbins, it's a dead certainty he did it with most of the others; it's his personality that is making the trouble, and we've got to discourage him."

"How?" asked Carroll.

Wade gave a few minutes to thought.

"Isn't Paul Stafford's nephew on the County Hospital staff?" he inquired at last. "It seems to me I recollect his getting a position there."

"That's right!" cried Carroll, jubilantly.

"And isn't Mrs. Stafford interested in the Training School for Nurses?" asked Wade.

"I believe she is," replied Carroll.

"And haven't you any influence at the County Hospital?" persisted Wade.

"That's enough!" exclaimed Carroll. "You have a memory for these things, Wade, that is simply great, but I don't have to be told how to play the game. Stafford is Marshall's right-hand man, and either Stafford or his nephew will have to quit. And that training-school business will put Mrs. Stafford on our side. Wade, we'll show Marshall that this fight is just beginning."

Within two days there came from the County Hospital a report of dissatisfaction with the nurses furnished by the training-school. The Warden said the school interfered with discipline and tried to run the hospital as an adjunct to the training-school. He also asserted that some nurses were put in there who did not know enough to take care of a sick cat, in consequence of which the patient suffered, and the county was practically defrauded. He did not see why a public institution should be made an experiment station for inexperienced girls and women, and he did not believe the public fully understood the situation.

Commenting on this, one of the County Commissioners said the Warden was quite right, that the hospital was being "used" to bolster up a private school, and that he would give his hearty support to any movement that promised to put an end to such a condition of affairs. And the newspaper that reported these things also called attention to complaints that had been made by one or two patients. It is a well-known fact that no hospital escapes complaints from some of its patients, their mental and physical condition frequently making them most unreasonable, but the public does not take this into consideration at such a time.

Paul Stafford heard from his wife promptly, for she was deeply interested in the training-school.

"We are giving them better service than they ever had before, at less expense," she said, "but they want to turn us out. I suppose it's politics."

"I suppose so," he admitted.

"Can't you do something about it?" she asked.

"What!" he exclaimed. "Why, if I showed any interest in it, they'd turn you out all the sooner."

"I believe that's the very reason they're doing it now," she asserted. "I'm going to find out."

Mrs. Stafford was a woman of energy and determination, and she had seen something of

politics in her charitable work. Consequently, she knew enough to go direct to headquarters.

"Mrs. Stafford," said the President of the County Board, courteously, "the politicians are merely human, and they do favours for their friends. Your husband gives his business to the men who are friendly to him, and the politicians do the same. Now I have no definite knowledge of the motives in the case, but I am able to draw my own conclusions, and I know there are some powerful men who are very bitter toward your husband. Please don't think I am speaking for them; I am merely explaining the matter to you, for I think you are engaged in a grand work, and I would like to see you succeed. But the County Board will decide, and I am only one member of that."

"Do you mean to say," demanded Mrs. Stafford, angrily, "that these men are so contemptible that they will turn out the nurses because the husband of one woman interested in the training-school happens to be opposed to them politically?"

"I am afraid they will," replied the President, "although your statement of the case is hardly fair. It is the vindictiveness of the fight that is being made against them that makes them anxious to retaliate."

"I am only one of a dozen or more women interested in the training-school," she urged.

"True," he admitted, "but your husband's course has made you the most important one at the present moment. I have nothing to do with the movement, you understand, and will gladly do what I can to retain your nurses, but I think I know what lies back of it all. It is unfortunate that there isn't more disinterestedness in political and business life, but you won't find it in either."

"I suppose," she said, with bitter humour, "I ought to get a divorce."

"That might help the training-school some," he laughed, "but there may be a better way."

She was not so unsophisticated that she did not know what this meant, and she knew also that the President was speaking for the others, in spite of the assertion to the contrary. He was very close to the men whose political supremacy was threatened.

"I don't see," she told her husband, "why some one else can't do the work that you are doing. Your victory will be dearly bought if it wrecks the training-school."

"It's damnable!" he exclaimed, angrily. "It's cowardly to strike at a man through his wife's philanthropies!"

"But that doesn't help matters," she said. "Even with the money we get for County Hospital nursing the training-school is not self-supporting; without it we will have a big deficiency to make up by private contributions. I doubt if we can do it. In any event, it will be a serious blow to the school."

Stafford chafed and fretted, but he could not escape the conclusion; the "machine" had sufficient power to do this, and there could be no doubt that it would do it. The public mind already was being put in a condition to accept the change by the published criticisms and complaints. He wondered if he really ought not to take a less prominent part in the movement. Might he not be doing more harm than good? In this mood he received a call from his nephew.

"Well, you're doing a fine thing for me, uncle," the latter announced. "Another week of this sort of thing and I'll be out."

"Have they been threatening you, too?" demanded Stafford.

"Well, not exactly threatening," was the reply, "but the foundation has been laid for my discharge, and Higbie has been giving me a nice fatherly talk. The Warden sent for me first. He said some com-

plaints against me had been filed with him — it's no trick at all to get complaints against any one, you know: — and he advised me to see Higbie. Well, Higbie knew of the complaints, and he was sure he could straighten the matter out, but he didn't see why he should. He also told me about the training-school trouble. There was a feeling, he said, that you ought to be willing to do as much for me and the school as others were expected to do, and that's all he would say. But any one can see what that means."

"Yes," replied Stafford, thoughtfully, "any one can see what that means."

Stafford's nephew had given Stafford a good deal of trouble and had cost a good deal of money. He was not a youth who was noted for either his ability or his stability, and it was not until he got the County Hospital position that his uncle had been relieved of the necessity of contributing to his support.

Stafford got up from his desk and walked nervously back and forth, while his nephew waited and wondered. There was no reason why another could not do his work on the committee; there were many who could do it without sacrificing so much. It was maddening that he should be "reached" in

this way, but he had no wish to have his nephew back on his hands, and an injury to the training-school would be a public and a domestic calamity. It was doing splendid work, and in its success his wife's interest was centred. He was angry, but he could look at the matter dispassionately. It was unjust and cowardly to put him in this predicament, but he was confronted by cold, hard facts.

"I shall not attend the meeting of the committee this afternoon," he told his nephew, finally, "and I shall probably resign the secretaryship before the end of the week. It will depend upon circumstances."

The next day a note from his nephew informed him that the Warden had decided to pay no attention to the charges filed, and the day after the President of the County Board, in a published interview, predicted that the training-school nurses would be retained. On the third day Stafford mailed his letter of resignation, in which he asserted that business obligations made it impossible for him to give the necessary time to the work.

Marshall was startled and annoyed by this desertion, but it did not have the effect that the "machine" had anticipated. He was not discouraged; on the contrary, he became more combative

than ever. He upbraided Stafford, recalling his promise, but Stafford remained firm, and the effect of his resignation was serious. Others seemed to lose interest and courage. What was the use of trying when defeat was practically certain? Why waste valuable time? But Marshall, by the most strenuous efforts, overcame this pessimism. He pointed out that the movement was already well under way, that public sentiment was aroused and was gathering force, that all lacking was united and energetic action by the members of the committee. He neglected his business shamefully, but he held the committee together and soon had the members working with greater enthusiasm than ever. He stirred up a discussion of available candidates in the newspapers, thus creating more widespread interest and gradually making the opposition to the "machine" an aggressive unit. In brief, the thing took the form of a popular uprising in the ranks of the party; it was sensational, the subject of general discussion that kept men alert, and the primaries promised startling results. Marshall's spirit of aggressiveness on the one hand and concession on the other was contagious; he did not wish to rule or to dictate; he sought only the strongest men. It was immaterial to him who was

County Treasurer or who was Sheriff, so long as they were honest and fiercely anti-"machine," and others unconsciously took the same position. In these circumstances it was a foregone conclusion that they would go into the convention strong and united. Indeed, a discerning politician could see that they were already "getting together" on two strong men, and that they were daily adding to the list of delegates that they would be able to send to the convention. There was no longer the indifference that allowed the "machine" to control in districts where it was numerically weak.

"If Marshall sticks," announced Wade, after a review of the situation, "we have mighty little chance of winning. Marshall is the keystone of this movement. If we could get him out of the way, it would go to pieces."

"Suppose he should happen to be 'done up' by footpads," remarked Higbie, suggestively.

Carroll looked at Wade, but Wade shook his head. Carroll's idea was that Higbie ought to have looked after this without saying anything to any one, but Wade was of different sort. Carroll would not openly sanction slugging, but he would gladly profit by it; Wade was temperamentally

opposed to anything of that nature, except possibly as a last resort.

"Unsatisfactory and dangerous," said Wade. "When I can't win without slugging, I'll retire from politics."

Carroll laughed in a disagreeable way.

"Sounds well," he said, "but there has been slugging that has helped us in times gone by."

Wade scowled. The responsibility for anything of that sort never had rested with him, and he did not like to have it brought home to him in this way. He distinctly disapproved of such methods, even when he accepted the fruits of them and forgave the offenders. The exigencies of politics made it necessary to overlook many things.

"Sometimes," he said, "we have to meet force with force, but this is a different matter. There would be more than a suspicion that it was politics and not robbery, even if the man was not caught. We've got to eliminate Marshall in some other way."

"How?" asked Carroll.

"Through his pocket," said Wade.

"He can't be bought," asserted Carroll. "He's too rich for that."

"I have discovered," said Wade, thoughtfully,

"that the rich man is the one who is most susceptible to financial influence of the right sort. He can't be bought — at least, directly — but he is vulnerable. He considers it his first duty to guard his bank account; attack that, and you can scare him to death. He'll spurn an offer of \$100,000 and throw a fit at the prospect of losing \$10,000 worth of business. Now, Marshall is a director of the Traders' Trust Company bank, where the county keeps a good part of its funds. Do you suppose you could get an intimation to the President of that bank that those funds are to be transferred to another repository?"

"That won't do the business," said Carroll, after a moment of thought.

"It has been published," continued Wade, "that old Hobbins has promised to contribute \$500 to the reform movement. It would be discouraging if Hobbins changed his mind. Hobbins is furnishing coal to some of the county institutions, and a slight change in the specifications would put him out of the running when the new contracts are let."

"Risky business if we overdo it," commented Carroll.

"Not so risky as slugging," returned Wade.

"Anything more?" asked Carroll.

"Marshall himself is in the stone business," said Wade. "He expects to furnish the stone for the new wing to the Southern penitentiary, although his bid has not been formally accepted. I think his partner, Pendleton, would be very much worried if he saw this job slipping away from him, and the State administration is very much ours."

"What are you going to do?" asked Carroll. "Do you expect me to look after everything?"

"You know how to do these things, Carroll," replied Wade, "and you have the men to use. We are working together for our common good, and I'll do my share by sitting right here until Marshall comes to me. I want him to come here, for the man who is in his own office has an advantage over the man who is in another fellow's office. He won't be long in discovering that he has got to see somebody, and you can see to it that he is referred to me. As it is my plan, and I am posted on all the details, I think I can handle him a little better than you."

"Sure," replied Carroll, frankly. "You're the man for that job. He's not my kind, and I'd probably have him fighting mad in two minutes."

Carroll had a better idea of his own diplomatic ability than the facts warranted, but he was wise enough to know that Wade was his superior in

handling some men. So he was quite ready to act in a subordinate capacity in this instance. Nor was his task so much inferior to Wade's. He had to lay the foundation upon which Wade would build the superstructure, and his work had to be cautious and effective. He had to bring three separate influences to bear on Marshall without appearing personally in the matter at all. But he did it. Marshall heard from the bank first.

"There seems to be some trouble over these county funds that concerns you," the President told him. "I don't quite understand what they want, but it might be worth while for you to see what's wrong."

Marshall knew what was wrong, but he took time for reflection before deciding on his course, and during this time he received word that Hobbins had changed his mind about the \$500 contribution to the reform fund.

"Discouraging!" he muttered. "I sacrifice my own interests and can't even get support from the men who will profit most by my work."

Then Pendleton told him that they were in a fair way to lose the Southern penitentiary stone contract.

"Why?" asked Marshall.

"You'll have to find that out for yourself," re-

plied Pendleton. "I was referred to Wade, but I can't do anything with him. Perhaps you can. You're in politics — too much in politics." Pendleton paused, to see how Marshall would take this, and then blurted out: "Confound it! I believe you've just about lost us this contract, and some others may follow. I never did believe in this political business, anyway. It takes time and it makes enemies. There's nothing in it except for the thieves; for others it means a loss — a real cash loss, as in this case. And it's my loss as well as yours."

A few weeks before Marshall would have resented this hotly, but he had lost some of his beligerency. Furthermore, he was a fair-minded man, and, from a business point of view, his partner had some reason for his anger. He was angry himself, but in a different way — angry enough to resign his bank-directorship if that would leave him free to act, but he couldn't very well resign his partnership. All in all, it was a costly business, and a thankless one. For what he was doing he would not get even gratitude. Stafford and Hobbins already had deserted, the bank was in a fair way to lose something, his partner was dissatisfied, and he himself could see a personal loss of time and

money. He began to reason in dollars and cents, and when a successful business man reasons in dollars and cents he ceases to be capable of disinterested action.

"I will see what I can do with Wade," he said.

Now was the situation suited to Wade's purpose! The aggressive reformer had been forced to come to him; the keystone of the reform movement was loosened.

Marshall was uncomfortable, and Wade gave him no helping hand, appearing to be ignorant and somewhat mystified as to the occasion for the visit. It was policy to force the reformer to make all the overtures. The man who asks is ever at a disadvantage when confronted with the man in whose power it lies to grant or refuse a request.

"I have not come on politics," Marshall blurted out, finally. "I have come to see about that Southern penitentiary stone contract."

"Then it is politics," returned Wade, blandly.

"It ought not to be," asserted Marshall.

"But it is," said Wade.

"Do you admit," demanded Marshall, "that you pay your political debts with public contracts, that you reward your friends and punish your enemies by deflecting public business, that you use the coffers

of the State or county to attain your personal ends?"

"The question, Mr. Marshall, is an insult," returned Wade, with dignity. "I said nothing that could be so interpreted. There are friends in politics as well as in business, and our friends are very true to us. They resent attacks on us as your friends would resent attacks on your business integrity. If a vicious assault were made on your business reputation, Mr. Marshall, would your friends go out of their way to give business or benefit of any kind to the man who had so assailed you?"

"Certainly not, but —"

"When you go into business you take the necessary risks and stand the losses as well as accept the profits, do you not?"

"Of course, but —"

"When you go into politics you have got to take the penalties as well as the rewards."

"But there are no personal rewards for me; I want none," urged Marshall.

"Then you get only the losses, the penalties," retorted Wade. "I don't think I should go into a game where my only chance is to lose."

"It's outrageous!" declared Marshall.

"It may seem so," returned Wade, "but it is only human nature, business nature. Frankly, Mr. Marshall, what you tell me is the first information I have had of this, but I have very good friends in influential places, and so have Carroll and some of the others. My friends naturally feel very bitter toward you, and they are doing just what your friends would do in similar circumstances. I can't very well upbraid them for their loyalty, can I?"

"If you knew nothing about it, why was I directed to come to you?" asked Marshall.

"It is possible," said Wade, with gentle significance, "that this was intended as a hint to you to make friends with me. If, as I suppose, loyalty to me and my associates is what lies back of it all, this is a plausible explanation."

Marshall looked fixedly at Wade for several minutes, but Wade only smiled pleasantly back at him. The business instinct in Marshall triumphed after a bitter struggle. It was humiliating, but what other course lay open to him?

"How can I do this?" he asked, finally.

"I am in the hands of my friends," smiled Wade.

"I am satisfied when they are."

An angry retort came to Marshall's lips, but he smothered it. He was reasoning in figures again.

A paper was lying on Wade's desk. It had been carelessly pushed aside, and now lay almost in front of Marshall. He could not help seeing the line, "Copy of the specifications for the new industrial school." What was Wade doing with it? Marshall's plan contemplated furnishing the stone for that structure, but the specifications might be so drawn as to exclude his stone. Why should the thing be submitted to Wade before the bids were asked?

"What do your friends wish me to do?" asked Marshall.

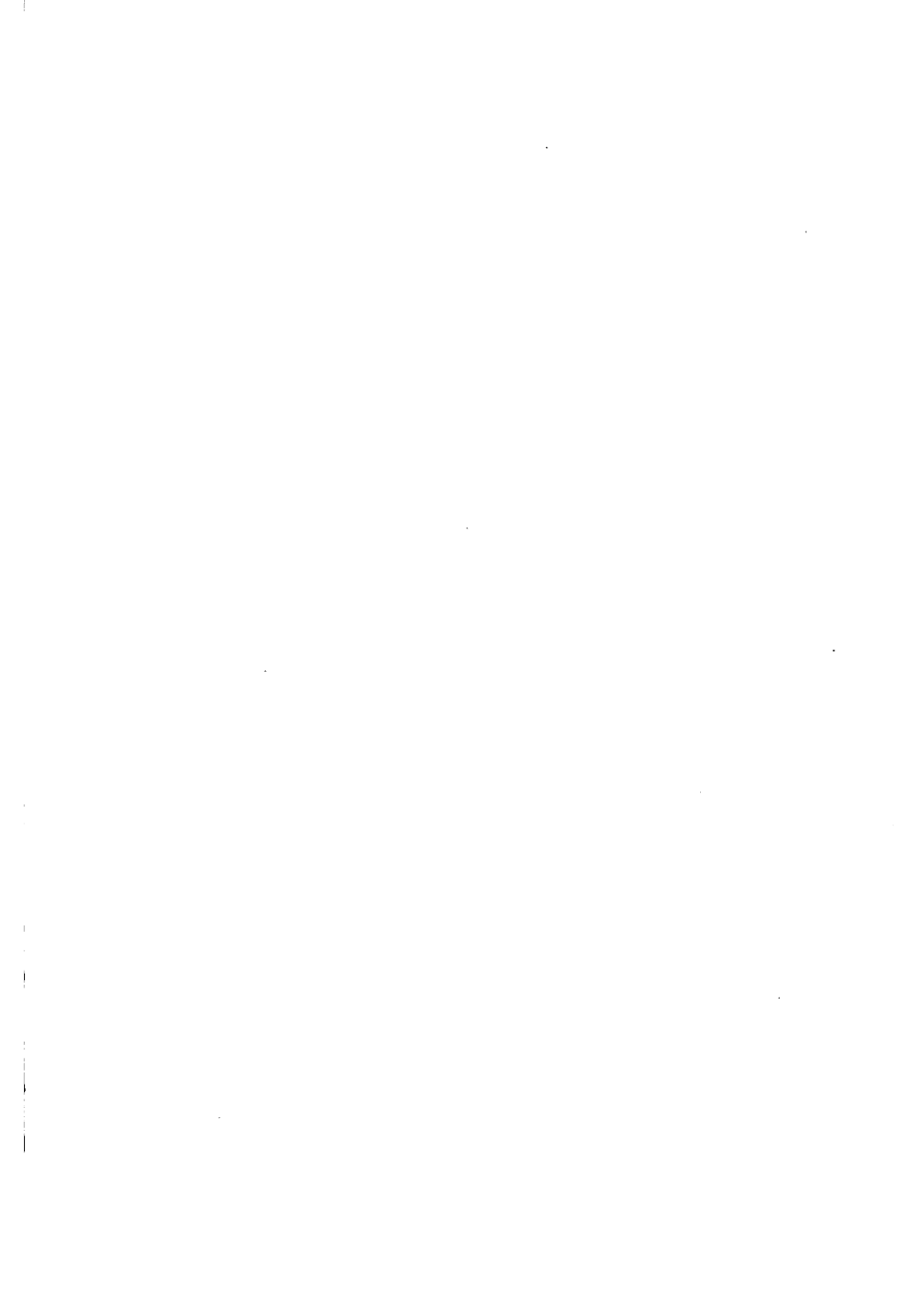
"Nothing," replied Wade.

It was cleverly put. He was asked to do nothing. It had an innocent sound, this answer to his question, but Marshall knew what it meant. The man who does nothing is not dangerous.

Marshall hated himself as he left the office; he despised himself when he told Pendleton that the stone contract was all right; he felt contemptible while he was informing the bank president that he need not worry about the county funds; but he continued to reason in figures, and tried to convince himself that he had done all that could be expected of him. Surely he could not be expected to carry the whole burden of the reform movement.



““WHAT DO YOUR FRIENDS WISH ME TO DO?” ASKED MARSHALL.”



Meanwhile Wade waited and watched the papers, and a day or so later he was rewarded by seeing a society item to the effect that Mr. Leroy N. Marshall, whose wife had been in California for several months, would join her there, and together they would visit a number of Pacific Coast points of interest, returning by way of the Canadian Rockies. Thereupon Wade called up Carroll on the telephone.

"The reform movement has collapsed," he announced.

And so far as effective and cohesive action was concerned, it had collapsed, although its actual demise was gradual.

III.

A MORTGAGE ON A MAN

DAVID CLOW was poor and honest when he was sent to the Legislature, and he withstood many temptations. He was unsophisticated without being entirely ignorant. He had heard a great deal about trickery and corruption in a general way, but he had no idea as to the form it would take. Consequently, he watched himself and others closely.

In time the edge of his suspicions wore off. There was a good deal of politics in the organization of the House, and he heard rumours of trading and treachery, but he saw nothing of the inside manipulation, and he simply "went with his party," as he had expected to do. Azro Craig puzzled him a little. Craig had such strong likes and dislikes and seemed determined upon upsetting some of the party plans. But Craig was honest and knew no more of practical politics than he did, so a friendship gradually developed between the two. Even if

Craig were aggressive in some ways that Clow could not quite understand, they could meet on the common ground of admiration for and loyalty to Wade, although they differed with regard to Carroll. Clow, as a party man, accepted both the leaders, while Craig considered Carroll the representative of all that was objectionable in the party organization. Clow accepted the "machine" as a necessary feature of politics: in strictly party matters he was with it, but he did not purpose to let it dictate his course in other details of legislation. Still, he could not forget that the "machine" leaders were men of experience, who understood things that puzzled him, and he was ready to advise with them on all topics. This was after his suspicions had been lulled to sleep by personal intercourse with the men. They were frank and clever; they asked nothing, except in the name of the party, and to the party he wished to be faithful. If they erred occasionally, he could see that it was through enthusiasm for party success. At any rate, no one made any improper proposals to him—not even the corporation agents that he had expected to find in large numbers at Springfield.

When Wade and Carroll, the "machine" leaders, split on the organization of the House, Clow was

in a quandary. He liked John Wade the better, but Ben Carroll certainly had as good a right to party leadership. In this emergency he stuck to Craig. He knew very little of what lay behind the fight, and he could not understand Craig's presumption in making a decided stand, but Craig was a good man and an honest one. Furthermore, Craig was one of the outsiders like himself. So without knowing it, Clow was used as a puppet by Wade through the influence of Craig; he became one of the little band that forced Carroll to let Wade put Henry Wellington in the chair. And, ignorant of the part he had unconsciously played, he was gratified when the two factions again united.

Meanwhile, Clow himself was under close scrutiny. Carroll was watching him, and so was Wade; but, as usual, for very different purposes. Carroll was figuring on the two committees that had been given him as the price of withdrawing Mackin from the Speakership contest. For reasons of his own he had selected the Committee on Railroads as one of these, and Mackin was to have the chairmanship of this as a reward for his ready obedience to the order to withdraw. But it was no easy task to select a committee that would appear to conform to custom in the method of selection

and still answer his purpose. His power here must not be too apparent, if he would escape a great public outcry; there must be a minority element that would satisfy the people, but, as a matter of safety, there must be some tractable men in this minority — men who were not publicly identified with him, but who would be subservient to his interests later. Would Clow be tractable?

Wade was asking himself the same question, but in his case it related to politics and not to finance. He wished to control personally. So long as he and Carroll had identical interests they would pull together, but he knew that he could not rely on Carroll one minute longer than it was to the latter's personal advantage to aid him. He had a higher aim than Carroll — a political aim that he did not confide even to his closest friends — and he wished to be in a position to compel acquiescence when the time came: he wished to have the power that would prevent any one from laughing when he mentioned the United States Senate. He could always "dicker" with Carroll for anything he wanted, provided he had the men or votes where-with to dicker, but that was unsatisfactory and uncertain. He wished to rule; he wished to be in a position to "block" Carroll whenever it might

be necessary, and thus to dictate terms. To do this every possible vote was of importance. He had captured Craig when all others had failed; how could he capture Clow?

Both men were cautious, and both investigated. They found that Clow was a poor man, to whom ready money would be a great boon. He had debts, among them an overdue note for \$500, on which \$100 had been paid, and, while the holder of the note had no wish to press matters, he was quite willing to sell it.

"Shall I get it?" asked Tom Higbie.

"Wait," replied Carroll. "I want to have a talk with him first."

"Better let me do the talking," suggested Higbie. "You're too strenuous and excitable when things don't go right."

"Perhaps that's wise," admitted Carroll; for he knew his own shortcomings and the abilities of his lieutenant. "I want to know how to place him; I want to get some idea of the man. Is he going to be easy, difficult, or impossible? That's the question, Higbie, and some idea as to how much this indebtedness is worrying him will help to answer it. But you'll have to be careful. He may be another Craig."



“‘POLITICS,’ SAID HIGBIE, ‘IS A BUSINESS’”

Of course Higbie made no direct overtures to Clow, but he sounded him cautiously. Although the time for decision was short, he succeeded in getting reasonably close to his man, and in having some confidential talks with him. Clow was glad to have some one who could give him information on puzzling points of politics, so he talked quite freely. He could not understand some of the moves made, and these Higbie explained in the way that best suited his purpose.

"Politics," said Higbie, "is a business, and no man does business solely for his health. His aim is Success, whatever his standard of success may be. He makes alliances with that end in view, he seeks to gain advantages over his competitors, he confers favours for that purpose. They are always talking about doing public business on a strictly business basis. That is the basis of it now. We do in politics precisely what the business men do in business: we put forward the men who can and will help us."

"That sounds all right," said Clow, dubiously.

"And it is all right," asserted Higbie. "The man of large corporate interests picks out a man that he knows to represent him on a board of directors, and the man of large political interests

uses the same caution in putting men on committees. In both cases men are wanted who will be faithful; in both cases faithful men are rewarded in one way or another. There is not a great financier or business man who has not made success for one or more that he can trust, and there is not a great politician who has not done the same thing. It is coöperation, and nowhere is coöperation more necessary than in politics, for no man can accomplish anything alone. He must have help, and to have help he must give it. Now you have the secret of success in public life."

Clow considered this thoughtfully for a few minutes. Then he saw where the fault lay.

"You are assuming," he said, "that the politician has a proprietary interest in the work of the committee. I am a party man, but I was not sent here to represent you or Carroll or Wade. The voters of my district elected me."

"But they can't put you on a good committee," asserted Higbie.

"Well, I don't much care," returned Clow. "If I'm going to let other people decide what I ought to do there's no use of my being here at all. It seems to me that my business is to do what *I* think is right, and that's what I'll do."

Higbie had been careful to make this a discussion of general legislative methods, without even an intimation of a direct proposition from him, and he now decided that it was useless to pursue the subject. Clow would think for himself on all but straight party questions, and he would think and act with resolute honesty. His manner and tone, more than his words, gave this impression. And the quickness with which he found the flaw in the comparison of directors and committeemen was evidence that he could not be easily befuddled or led. Possibly, in a desperate financial predicament, he might prove vulnerable, but even that was unlikely. Indeed, Clow himself presently destroyed all hope of that.

"I'll tell you a few things," he said, after a pause, "that will prove my sincerity. I am a merchant in a small town, with an old father and mother dependent upon me. A good education was all that my father was able to give me before illness compelled him to retire from business life. I took charge of his business, and for twenty years or more I have been a country merchant with a dwindling trade. There has been occasional improvement in it, but most of the time it has been a serious task to get even a moderate living out of it, es-

pecially for one with an invalid father who requires considerable attention. Very likely another could have done better, but I am not a good business man, and had planned to study for a profession. Something over a year ago I borrowed five hundred dollars, and I had almost despaired of ever being able to pay it when I was offered this nomination and accepted it. I hesitated at first, — I tell you frankly I was afraid of myself under the circumstances, for I had heard a great deal about the temptations, and I knew, with my necessities, that money would have a fearful fascination for me, — but the salary was a great inducement. It seemed to me that, by living cheaply, I could save half of the one thousand dollars I get for the session, and pay the balance still due on that note, while the store, in charge of a trustworthy clerk, would defray the expenses of the rest of the family. You know how I am living here, Mr. Higbie; you have seen enough to know that I am saving the money as I planned. If I am doing that, do you think there is any man on God's earth who can buy my independence as a legislator and a man with either favours or cash? I am not suspecting you of trying to buy it, although I have been pretty suspicious since I got here; but you have been telling me how things are done, and

I am giving you proof that I won't do them that way. I am ignorant of methods here, I have lived among simple people, but I know there is money to be had by the unscrupulous, and yet I am getting what I need by rigid economy. Is it necessary to say more?"

Higbie reached forward and grasped his hand impulsively.

"Not one word," he said. "You have a higher sense of honour and a stronger will than any other man in this Legislature, and I honour you for it."

Then Higbie went to see Carroll.

"You're on a dead card," he told the latter. "You'll have to shuffle the pack again."

"Can't do anything with him?" asked Carroll.

"Not a thing," said Higbie. "He hasn't even political ambition and doesn't care whether he's on one committee or another. He's going back to his store after this one term, but while he's here he's going to do his own thinking, and it's going to be the kind of thinking that his constituents expect. You've got only one hold on him."

"What's that?"

"He's a Republican from the ground up, but that won't help you just now."

"No," said Carroll, thoughtfully; "I want more than that."

Then Higbie went over the conversation in detail.

"There can be no doubt," he said, in conclusion, "that a demand for the payment of that note at this time would make a devilish lot of trouble for him, and a threat to begin suit would put him face to face with probable ruin. He must have other creditors who would come down on his store like a thousand of brick. No one can say positively what he would do to save himself, but he has the manner of a man who would be fool enough to accept ruin. Still, there would be no risk, for the note will be paid in time, if you don't have to use it. His one ambition is to get that out of the way. It may be worth trying."

"What's the use?" returned Carroll, after a moment of thought. "I haven't any four hundred dollars that I want to tie up on an uncertainty. Just tell Wade that Clow is out of the running so far as I am concerned."

"It's funny what fools some of these country members can be," commented Higbie.

When Wade received the message he pondered deeply. Speaker Wellington was his man, and Speaker Wellington was taking care of various

members in whom he had an interest. Indeed, the committee announcements, with a few necessary exceptions, had been held up from day to day to permit him and Carroll to do a little preliminary dickering. He wondered whether it would be worth while to "take care of" Clow or would be advisable to "side-track" him. He would have very little personal use for Clow if the latter stuck to his determination to be satisfied with one term, for the culmination of his plans was due at the next session, but he had little confidence in single-term declarations. He recalled others who had been quite as modest and who had been found working strenuously for a reelection a little later. No doubt Clow was honest in his assertion, but a little political experience had a way of changing men's views. In any event, the stronger he could show himself to be in this Legislature, the better his chances would be in the next. Power begets power, and no one can tell when a certain man may be useful. That had been Wade's theory from the beginning. The man who is master to-day may so lay his plans that he can dictate nominations to-morrow, and thus rule again when it may be more important to his individual interests.

In this emergency Wade made the mistake of

going to Craig. He knew it was unwise, but there seemed to be no other course open. Craig was closer to Clow than any one else, and Wade flattered himself that he could make use of Craig without letting the old man discover his real purpose. He put it on the ground that he wished to get as intimate a knowledge as possible of the man in order that he might be put on the committees where he would prove most valuable. But it had begun to dawn on Craig that these men from Chicago were taking too deep an interest in the Legislature.

"What's the committees to you?" he asked, pointedly. "You ain't the Speaker; you ain't even a member of the Legislature."

"Quite right, Azro," admitted Wade; "but my experience in politics makes me of some value to Wellington, and he has asked me to advise with him. You know I had something to do with naming him."

The old man shook his head doubtfully.

"I s'pose it's all right," he said, "but I'm darned if it don't seem to me like you an' Carroll is takin' too blamed much on yourselves down here."

"I thought you were my friend, Azro, and had confidence in me," argued Wade.

"Oh, you're white, Jack, an' I like you," returned



“‘YOU GO BACK TO CHICAGO’”

Craig, "but I'd feel a lot more comfortable if you'd go back to Chicago an' look after your own business. I ain't sayin' you wasn't right in mixin' in on the Speakership, so's to knock out Carroll's man, but that's over now, an' I don't see why you got to keep on mixin' in. An' I'll tell you another thing, Jack: I ain't never felt jest right about the way you patched it up with Carroll."

"I got our man for Speaker by doing it, didn't I?" asked Wade.

"Oh, yes," admitted Craig, "but it ain't my way to make terms with the devil. You're my friend, Jack—you showed you was a real friend up to Chicago when all the rest was pertendin' to be my friends while they was guyin' me—an' so I'm talkin' to you straight, like man to man. You go back to Chicago. Folks is sayin' things, an' the papers is sayin' things, an' it looks like they had reason."

"I'm going back just as soon as these committees are out of the way," said Wade, with great apparent frankness. "There's a lot of hard sense in what you say, Azro, but I promised to give Wellington the benefit of my advice, and we don't know where Clow will fit in."

"No more do I," replied Craig, "only that he'll

fit his fist in the face of any feller that asks him to do what he don't think is right. He ain't sayin' much, but he's got his mind made up, an' he's been scared to death for fear he'd have to hit somebody. Only jest beginnin' to feel easy an' decent, owin' to bein' let alone. But there's a note that's worryin' him a good deal."

"I've heard about it," said Wade, incautiously.

"You hear too much, Jack Wade," retorted Craig.

"Carroll told me," said Wade, lying cheerfully in an effort to rectify his error.

"It didn't seem like you to be diggin' into a man's private affairs," returned Craig, with evident relief, "an' it won't do Carroll no good. You kin tell him that from me."

"I'm not carrying messages to Carroll," laughed Wade. "I'm trying to help Wellington with the committees, and all this is of no earthly importance."

But, as a matter of fact, it was of supreme importance, and Wellington was informed that he could do as he pleased in the matter of placing Clow. Neither Wade nor Carroll had any further immediate interest in the matter. In consequence Clow found himself where he would have little or nothing

to do with important legislation, except on the floor of the House,

Wade knew that he had made a mistake in going to Craig. He saw that the old man was becoming uneasy, and, in spite of the plausible explanation made, the visit had added to his disquietude. Later a second mistake was made, but it was not Wade who made it this time; on the contrary, Wade profited by it. He was not infallible, but he seldom made two mistakes in succession. In this case an innocent-looking bill appeared in the House, and none of the "wise ones" seemed to see the significance of it. It related to the licensing of express companies, and required that any corporation, firm, or individual, doing an interurban express business, should take out a State license. In terms it was very sweeping, but there was nothing to indicate that the regular express companies were at all alarmed by it, and no one else seemed to be interested. Wade heard of it in time to suggest that it be sent to the Committee on Commerce, and it was so referred.

The Committee on Commerce was not an important one from either a boodler's or a practical politician's point of view. Indeed, it seemed to have been devised largely for the purpose of taking

care of men who were not wanted on other committees, for somehow the Committee on Railroads usually got everything in the commerce line that was worth having. Azro Craig and David Clow were members of the Committee on Commerce.

"Perhaps," mused Wade, "I can reach Clow with this. It is worth trying. But I don't see how Carroll overlooked it."

Wade had gone to Chicago after the committees had been made up, thereby raising himself somewhat in Craig's estimation, but he kept in close touch with certain legislators, and a word or two of advance information about this bill had brought him back. He seldom overlooked an opportunity, and he never lost sight of a man who could be made useful to him. Clow had had to be eliminated from his plans temporarily, but he never had been wholly abandoned: there was always a chance of a combination of circumstances that would put any man he wanted within reach. So Wade, in his clever, careless way, as if it were a matter of no importance, had this bill sent to the Committee on Commerce, and he laughed inwardly as he did it.

"Carroll will have a fit when he wakes up," he said.

While Carroll did not go through many contor-

tions and foam at the mouth, he swore mightily when he discovered what had escaped him.

"Why, say!" he cried, "that bill is in the interest of the big express companies."

"Surely," returned Wade, pleasantly. "There are a whole lot of people in the towns surrounding Chicago who make a living by doing the city shopping for residents of their districts. They make one or two trips a week, bringing the parcels back with them. It has annoyed the express companies and the railroads a good deal. Didn't you know that, Carroll?"

"Why, under the terms of that bill," exclaimed Carroll, ignoring the question, "the one-horse expressman can't carry a package a foot beyond the limits of his own town without paying a license fee, and the interurban trolley that carries a basket of eggs to market will find itself in all kinds of trouble."

"Of course," admitted Wade, with aggravating good-humour. "The trolley people have been so obliging that they have hurt the express business. And there are men and boys who make regular trips to take charge of parcels."

"But there's money in that bill!" cried Carroll.

"There was," corrected Wade. "The right

kind of a committee could have made a good thing out of it, but I don't think the Committee on Commerce will."

Extraordinary interest now centred in a committee previously considered unimportant. The bill in its custody might be reported favourably or unfavourably, or it might be held up indefinitely. A great deal depended on the committee's action, for it was rumoured that success in one State would encourage the express companies to try similar legislation in other States, and the report of this first committee would give a basis for speculation as to the future. Success promised a large increase of business for the express companies. The stock market, responsive to the most trifling influences, was unsteady so far as express stocks were concerned. They went up when the true import of the bill first became known, and then rumours of unfavourable action sent them down.

Wade watched and waited, while conflicting reports came from the committee. But he managed to see a good deal of Clow, and Clow talked of the bill.

"There is some underhanded work going on," he said one day. "If that bill had been reported back the day it came to us, it would have

been reported unfavourably, but it is practically certain now that it will go back with a favourable report. I tell you, it doesn't look right."

"Why not?" asked Wade, carelessly.

"It's a bad bill," asserted Clow, earnestly. "It's going to put friends and neighbours of some of these men out of business, it's going to inconvenience a lot of people, it's going to hurt some hard-working expressmen, it's going to be a good thing for a few corporations, and for no one else. The voters of the districts from which most of these committeemen come are dead against it, but it will be reported favourably. That's what doesn't look right."

"The information you are giving me," said Wade, slowly, "is worth a lot of money."

"How?" asked Clow.

"A favourable report will put up the stocks of the companies affected," explained Wade. "So far nearly all the rumours have been unfavourable, which has had a depressing effect. A man who knows what that committee will do can make a very tidy little sum."

"It wouldn't be honest," asserted Clow.

"Why not?" returned Wade, argumentatively.

"If he let the thing affect his individual action, it

would not be honest, of course, but why should he not trade on his information? Why would it be any more dishonest in him than in some outside broker, so long as he votes honestly? If I choose to act on the information you have given me, am I dishonest?"

"No-o."

"Then why should it be dishonest for you or any one else to use the information the same way? I tell you frankly, Clow, that I shall buy express stock on the strength of this information, and I don't see why you shouldn't do the same thing. But it's nothing to me one way or another. I'll buy for you at the same time, if you wish, but I certainly don't want to urge you to do anything that is going to worry your conscience."

"I don't think I'll do it," said Clow, slowly. "I haven't the money anyway."

"Oh, that's all right," returned Wade. "I'd telegraph my own broker and have him buy it all for my account. Your I O U would be all the protection I'd want, for there'd be no money to put up unless the deal went wrong, and it couldn't go wrong if your information is correct. However, suit yourself."

"I don't think I'll do it," Clow repeated very slowly, and Wade did not press the matter.

But the idea took possession of Clow, as he returned to his shabby little boarding-house. He did not doubt Wade's disinterestedness in this matter, for Wade had not wished to influence his vote and apparently had not cared what action the committee took. It was merely a fine question of ethics. After all, he reflected, it was the way he voted that counted; but could he trust himself to vote conscientiously if the result happened to rest on his vote? It was a preposterous supposition, in view of the circumstances, but he could not help asking himself the question. And would he support his convictions as earnestly if his financial interests were opposed to them? He thought he would. He had schooled himself to ignore financial considerations when he came to the Legislature, and, so far as the committee was concerned, the matter was practically settled now, anyway. Still, it was better to avoid temptation.

Carroll found him in this uncertain mood. Carroll had been having a strenuous time, trying to remedy his oversight in not having the express bill sent to the Committee on Railroads. At first he had thought of "holding it up" in the House until he

could make a satisfactory "deal," but to do that would require a large and loyal following that could be swung first one way and then the other. He might get his chance in the House or he might not. There was reason to believe that things already had been pretty well "greased" in the House without his intervention. In that case the lines would be closely drawn at the start, and he would have little with which to work. His best chance was with the committee. If he could merely give the appearance of control there he might be able to dictate terms. But the men who had the bill in charge had been working while he was sleeping in Chicago — before he realized what there was in it, and rushed back to Springfield in the wake of Wade — and they laughed at his threats. Thus, prestige, as well as more material advantages, was in question. If he could postpone the presentation of the report for twenty-four hours it would give the promoters a fright and make them tractable.

"Clow," he said, "when's that report going in?"

"To-morrow," replied Clow.

"I want it held forty-eight hours. It's important."

"Why don't you see the chairman?" asked Clow.

"Oh, he's bought up by the express people," exclaimed Carroll, angrily, "but he won't force an immediate report in the face of objections in the committee. I've got two men who will stand with you."

"Not with me," returned Clow. "If you'll show me how to get the report changed, I might."

"But I don't want it changed."

"Then it goes in, for all of me," said Clow. "I've heard of you in connection with this matter, Carroll, and I don't trust you. You've been too anxious to get mixed up in it. It's not a party question."

"Confound it!" cried Carroll, "I'll break you if you try to turn me down. I bought up your note before I came to you." Clow became suddenly very white, but he said nothing. Carroll misinterpreted his paleness.

"It rests with you," said Carroll, still threateningly, "whether I sue on that note to-morrow or tear it up to-day. I want that report held back for at least twenty-four hours — forty-eight hours, if possible. I don't want to tinker with it or change it, but I want it held back. It's a small matter, but it's worth four hundred dollars to me and to you."

"I've been looking for you," said Clow, with

forced calmness. "I decided what I would do to men of your kind before I came here, and I'm glad of a chance to test the strength of my resolution."

Then, before Carroll had time to grasp the meaning of this, Clow sprang at him with the fierceness of a tiger, and they went through the door of Clow's room into the hall together, where they tripped and fell. Clow was on his feet first, and he deliberately kicked Carroll. "Get out, you dog!" he said.

"I'll break you for this!" roared Carroll, regaining his feet, and rapidly retreating. "I'll put you out of business!"

"But you'll never try to buy me again," retorted Clow, as he returned to his room, there to remain when he should have gone to the Capitol for the daily session of the House. He was in no humour for public business. Suit would be begun on that note, and he felt sure that the sheriff would be in possession of his store before the close of another day. He had creditors among the Chicago and St. Louis wholesale houses who would be alarmed by court proceedings. They had shown some evidences of uneasiness before. He wondered how soon suit would be begun. It was still comparatively early in the day, but Carroll had said "to-

morrow." To-morrow the committee report would go in and express stocks would go up. The question was already settled, and his record was clear; he had voted against a favourable report, but he had been almost alone.

"Mr. Clow?" said a man at his door, inquiringly.

"Yes."

"My name is Lang, of the legal firm of Pettus & Lang."

"He hasn't wasted any time," said Clow, grimly.

"I have an overdue note of yours," explained Lang, "and I am instructed to sue if it is not paid."

"How much time will you give me?" asked Clow.

"None," replied Lang.

"Surely you will give me time to write home and get an answer," urged Clow.

"Can you pay it then?" asked Lang, doubtfully.

"If I can't," said Clow, "I will confess judgment on it and so save you trouble and expense."

Lang hesitated. Evidently he was surprised.

"That's a fair proposition," he said at last. "I presume I would be justified in accepting it although my client apparently contemplated immediate action."

"There is nothing to be gained by suit," argued

Clow. "I will pay you in full not later than to-morrow evening, or confess judgment the first thing the following morning."

"I'll do it," said Lang. "I'm sure my client didn't expect this when he instructed me to sue."

Clow hunted up the chairman of the Committee on Commerce after the lawyer had departed. Nothing, he was told, could keep that report back a single hour, a rumour that something of that sort was to be attempted having alarmed those who were interested in the measure. Then Clow searched for and found Wade.

"The committee report on that bill will be public property after the opening of the session to-morrow," he said. "If I buy express stock to-day and sell to-morrow, can I have the profit on the deal telegraphed me to-morrow afternoon?"

"Give me a written order to buy, as a matter of protection in case the thing goes wrong," returned Wade, with a triumphant smile that Clow was too worried to detect, "and I will have the stock bought for my own account and personally pay you the profit on a telegraphic report of the price at which it is sold."

"I don't feel quite right about it," Clow explained, as he wrote the order, "but I can't see just

what's wrong, and I've got to do something. I have just had the pleasure of knocking Carroll down, and he's going to sue on a note of mine that he holds unless I am able to pay it to-morrow afternoon."

"Carroll is a good friend of mine," said Wade to himself, "but he doesn't happen to know it this time."

The following afternoon Azro Craig came upon John Wade in the act of putting two folded sheets of paper in an envelope. One was an order to buy express stock, and the other was a receipt for the profits of the deal, and both were signed by a man who had acted on the bill in committee. To a man who understood all the circumstances they might seem innocent, but by a suspicious public they would not be so regarded.

"What you got?" asked Craig.

"A mortgage on a man," replied Wade, with thoughtless jocularly.

"When you goin' to foreclose?" asked Craig.

"When I need the man," replied Wade.

Craig knitted his brow. There was a coldbloodedness in politics that was making him suspicious even of the friends to whom he wished to be most loyal.

IV.

THE SLAVERY OF A BOSS

It was no new thing for Dick Haggin to be in trouble, and he was not in the least worried by his arrest.

"You've had me before," he told the desk sergeant, "but you couldn't never keep me. You'll hear from the main squeeze before long."

But somehow conditions seemed to be different this time.

"You'll have to give a real bond," the sergeant told him. "We've quit dealing in straw bail."

There was an element of grim humour in this, for there had been some recent scandals that had hit the justice courts and the police, and they were still squirming under the censure of the public. There was no evidence of direct connivance with malefactors, but there was evidence of a strong desire to oblige men of political influence, at least to the extent of being careless and lax in the inter-

pretation and enforcement of the law. But Haggin did not know that an investigation was then under way that promised to make a lot of trouble for complaisant officials, and it was with the utmost confidence that he sent word of his predicament to Alderman Bogan.

The alderman responded promptly.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"Nabbed me while I was doing a jay," replied Haggin.

"You make more trouble than any other ten men," retorted the alderman, disgustedly. "Why don't you cut that sort of thing out?"

"I didn't want to do it — honest, I didn't — but it was too easy," pleaded Haggin. "There ought to be a law against lettin' these yahoos come to town with big bunches of money. I can stand a good deal, but I ain't no angel, an' it worries me to see folks with money that they don't know how to take care of. Anyhow, I ain't no use to nobody while I'm locked up."

"I'll see what I can do," said the alderman.

Politicians of a certain class look upon some malefactors much as an indulgent parent looks on a wayward child. They may scold and threaten, but they will do what they can to protect the offender from

the penalty of the offence. They do not condone it in words, but they do in deeds, and they find political advantage and personal gratification in the ascendancy they thus gain over men that the good citizen fears. It has happened before this that the victim of a robbery has had all the stolen things returned to him after it became known that he was the personal friend of some unscrupulous local politician.

So Alderman Bogan had a talk with the captain.

"It's all right," he said. "I'll answer for him. It's nothing but a 'disorderly' case, anyway."

"He's 'booked' for robbery," replied the captain.

"A mistake," asserted the alderman. "I'll speak to the justice about it myself, and you know well enough the yahoo won't appear against him."

"He's got to appear against him," returned the captain, "in order to get his watch and money back. They're held as evidence. Since the last roast we got, alderman, we're taking no chances, and I don't think the justice is, either."

The alderman began to see that this thing was going to be more difficult than usual, but he had particular reasons for wanting to take care of Haggin, so he went in search of a Democratic colleague,

Alderman Bradley. While of opposite political parties, they had found many ways in which they could be useful to each other. It was an alliance of convenience with which politics had nothing to do. They might be as antagonistic as they pleased on party questions, but each would rather have the other in the Council than another man of his own political party. In brief, they were of the number that a protracted "reform" campaign had failed to reach. The Council had been improved, but it was still far from perfect.

"One of the boys is in trouble," announced Alderman Bogan.

"It's a bad time," said Alderman Bradley. "You'd better let him slide if you can."

"But I can't," returned Bogan. "He isn't the common run, and he can do a lot of harm. I tried to talk to the captain, but he wouldn't listen. The administration is Democratic, you know."

Bradley nodded. Minor officials were disposed to oblige an alderman regardless of his politics, but in a case like this, all else being equal, a Democrat might be able to do more than a Republican.

"I'll talk to him," said Bradley.

The captain remained obdurate, however. The man had been "booked," and that settled it. He

would not be released until bail bonds had been furnished and approved by a police magistrate. And the justices had suddenly become very particular about bail bonds.

"As I understand it," said the alderman, carelessly, "it's a trifling affair, and he'll be discharged by the justice to-morrow, anyway."

"It's not a trifling affair to me," asserted the captain. "I'd like to oblige you, but I don't see how I can do it."

"Perhaps you're right," admitted the alderman. "They have been raising a good deal of a rumpus over police stations and police courts lately, and I don't want to get you into trouble."

Bradley could not afford to show too deep a personal interest in the case; if he made it appear important his hope of success was thereby lessened, for the captain would have greater fear of consequences. Perhaps it would be better to try to get results through the City Hall, although it was rather late for that.

As he left the police station he was accosted by a man who plainly showed that he was from the country.

"Be you an alderman?" asked the farmer.
"The constable said you was."

"Yes," replied Bradley, "what can I do for you?"

"I ain't jest sure," said the farmer, "but mebber you kin get my watch an' money for me."

"Who's got them?" asked Bradley.

"The fellers in there," said the farmer, indicating the police station. "They took 'em from the man that robbed me, an' they won't give 'em back."

"Why not?"

"They say if I got 'em I'd go back home without appearin' ag'in' the man that did it."

"Would you?"

"You bet I would!" exclaimed the farmer, and then he seemed to regret his words and began to apologize.

"The folks'll be worried 'bout me," he explained, "an' it costs money to stay here, an' a feller I was talkin' to said they'd most likely tie me up fer a week or more an' make me come back four or five times, an' I can't afford it. Seems like the easiest thing is jest to light out for home if I git a good chance. That's what the feller told me."

The alderman did not ask who "the feller" was, but he had no doubt in his own mind that the friends of Haggin were at work trying to spoil the case by getting the prosecuting witness out of the way. If

he could help them, he would be helping Bogan. So he led the farmer back into the police station.

"Captain," he said, with the air of one righteously championing the weak, "can't you give this man his watch and money?"

The captain looked at the alderman with a shrewd smile. "Certainly," he answered.

There was the light of victory in the alderman's eye.

"But," added the captain, "if I do, I'll have to lock him up as a witness."

"Oh, that's a confounded outrage!" cried the alderman, excitedly, and then he added, "What's the matter with you, anyway? You seem to have got ugly all of a sudden."

"I'm looking out for my job," returned the captain. "So many prosecuting witnesses have disappeared lately that it will take only one more case to have me before the trial board for wilful neglect of duty. I've been too obliging."

Alderman Bradley was angry, but he could not blame the captain. The latter had suffered in popular estimation for his complaisance in heeding the requests of men of local influence, and it certainly was a bad time to give grounds for any further criticism. While never directly accused of "graft-

ing," the captain unquestionably had been "accommodating" in the way of accepting personal assurances that "it's all right" in minor cases, and many had escaped punishment in consequence. Occasionally, through some slip, a prosecuting witness had appeared in court the next day, and the absence of the prisoner had created unfavourable comment.

So Dick Haggin, handy man politically and criminally, remained in his cell and wondered where the hitch was, while Alderman Bradley was reporting to Alderman Bogan that there was "nothing doing" with the police, and the matter would have to be arranged some other way.

"He's got to stay there to-night," said Bradley. "If it was plain 'disorderly' it might be different, but he was caught with the goods on him. It's a nasty business, Bogan. I don't like it myself."

"A little slip," said Bogan, indulgently. "I roasted him for it, but some of these yaps ought to have their money taken away from them so that they can't tempt good men to do wrong."

"That's right, too," admitted Bradley, who kept a saloon where men were parted from their money with great cleverness, "but that doesn't help things now. There are only three men who can turn him loose to-night, — the mayor, the chief of police, and

the justice, — and you know what kind of a show there'd be with any one of them in a case like this."

"None," said Bogan. "There isn't money enough in Chicago to get them to interfere with a case of a stray dog just now, unless you can show a real reason for it. A hard-luck story, with the right kind of backing, might have got action from one of them awhile ago, but —"

"Not in a case of robbery," put in Bradley. "It has done the business for a 'plain drunk' or an 'innocent spectator' caught in a raid now and then, but not for a man caught with the goods on him — that is, not if they knew it. I thought of the City Hall end myself. It's no use, Bogan; you've got to leave him there to-night, and you'd better keep your hands off to-morrow."

"I can't," protested Bogan. "If I turn him down, I might just as well pass up the ward and get ready for trouble. I tell you, he's been a handy man, and he has friends. He knows things. It's up to me to do the best I know how, and he's not the only one watching me, either. I'll have to fix it for him in the morning, sure."

"Well, you don't have to be told how," laughed Bradley.

There were several methods of procedure known to such experienced local politicians as Bogan and Bradley. In the ordinary course of events Haggin would be held to the grand jury, but the justice could change the charge to "disorderly conduct" and let him go under a suspended fine. If he refused to suspend the fine, it could be paid. But there was every reason to believe that the justice would be as difficult to handle as the captain. If the suggestion came from the city prosecuting attorney or one of his assistants, however, it would relieve the justice of much of the responsibility. It was not an uncommon thing for the city prosecutor to suggest such a course when the evidence did not seem strong enough to convict of the more serious charge. But here again there had been criticism, and, furthermore, the presence of the prosecuting witness would make the scheme too transparent.

In these unusual circumstances it seemed unwise to Bogan to trust entirely to his own influence. If he tried it and failed, it would make the task so much the more difficult for another. The assistant city prosecutor in that particular court was a man who owed his position to John Wade, one of the big men of the Republican "machine." So to John Wade Alderman Bogan went.

"No," said Wade, when the case was stated to him.

"Why not?" asked Bogan, bewildered; for he had not expected such an uncompromising refusal, that seemed to leave no room for argument.

"For several reasons," replied Wade. "For one thing, the man is a Republican under a Democratic city administration, and the influence that put him there isn't strong enough to hold him in the face of any kind of a scandal. I know, because I had something to do with the deal."

"There won't be any scandal," urged Bogan. "Who's going to care what's done with Haggin?"

"That brings me to the second reason," said Wade. "There's a lot of attention being given to these matters just now, and a thing like that is likely to raise the devil."

"It won't hurt you," persisted Bogan.

"That brings me to my third reason," said Wade. "It's nasty, dirty politics, and I'll have nothing to do with it. If you want to use hold-up men and thugs, it's your business, but I won't. When I have to mix up in criminal cases to win, I'll quit. I've got a little self-respect left."

"That's all you will have left if you get up out of reach of the common people," retorted Bogan.

"I'll take my chances," returned Wade.

Bogan hesitated. There seemed to be little hope of success here, but a great deal was at stake, so he repressed his anger.

"If the watch and money are returned," he said, insinuatingly, "there will be no prosecuting witness on hand to-morrow, but the captain won't assume the entire responsibility of returning them. If the assistant city prosecutor should advise it —"

"He won't," broke in Wade, angrily.

"The yahoo needs the money," argued Bogan. "At the most, it would be considered no more than an evidence of unwise sympathy, a wish to save him unnecessary hardship —"

"If you use criminals," exclaimed Wade, "you've got to look out for them yourself! I won't raise a finger to save a man from the consequences of crime — that is, real crime." Wade made a distinction between "real crime" and "political offences;" for at times he had exerted himself quietly and unostentatiously to save men from the penalties incurred by too great "enthusiasm" for the success of the party, and he had not hesitated to profit by practices that he never sanctioned. But there was great consolation for him in the fact that he never allied himself, even indirectly, with "real crime."

That there were some depths of practical politics to which he would not go, gave him a gratifying sensation of being "clean," and he had a certain amount of contempt for those of the slum wards who found it necessary to interest themselves in "dirty cases." Still, he was not unmindful of the value of their friendship.

Carroll, who shared with Wade the responsibilities of directing the destinies of the "machine," was not so particular. His education had been in a lower stratum of politics, anyway, and he lacked Wade's "fine discrimination." So he was readily converted to Bogan's view of the case—the more readily, perhaps, because he had better reason to know the importance of getting Haggin out of the clutches of the law.

"I know the justice," he said. "I don't know what I can do with him, but I'll try. You get some one to throw a 'scare' into the yahoo, so that he won't say any more than he has to, if we don't succeed in getting him out of the way."

"That's easy," returned Bogan. "All he wants is a chance to get home with his watch and money."

"And see Haggin," added Carroll. "Tell him to keep his mouth shut, and he'll come out all right."

Then Ben Carroll visited the justice at his house. The justice was a Republican and something of a politician, although not a very active one. Still, he knew something of the exigencies of politics, and he wished to be "accommodating" so long as it required no serious dereliction of duty. He was assured that it was a small matter, that the prosecuting witness had no wish to press the case, and that a suspended fine on a charge of disorderly conduct would answer all the requirements.

"Why wasn't he arraigned to-day?" asked the justice.

"Well, it was rather late when he was arrested," replied Carroll, "and the case seemed to require some investigation. Bogan was looking after it. He thought of asking to have the man admitted to bail, but he didn't want to go on the bond himself —"

"And bonds have to be good these days," laughed the justice, with the air of one who quite understood the situation. It was not a matter of temporary liberty, but of complete freedom. "Well, if it's really a trifling affair, and no objection is raised," he went on, "I'll change the charge to disorderly conduct and impose a small fine, pro-

vided the suggestion is made by the city prosecutor. There ought not to be any trouble about that."

Carroll tried to explain that the prosecutor for that court was in an awkward position; that it was a matter of political expediency alone, but he could not venture to make such a recommendation. The justice was instantly suspicious.

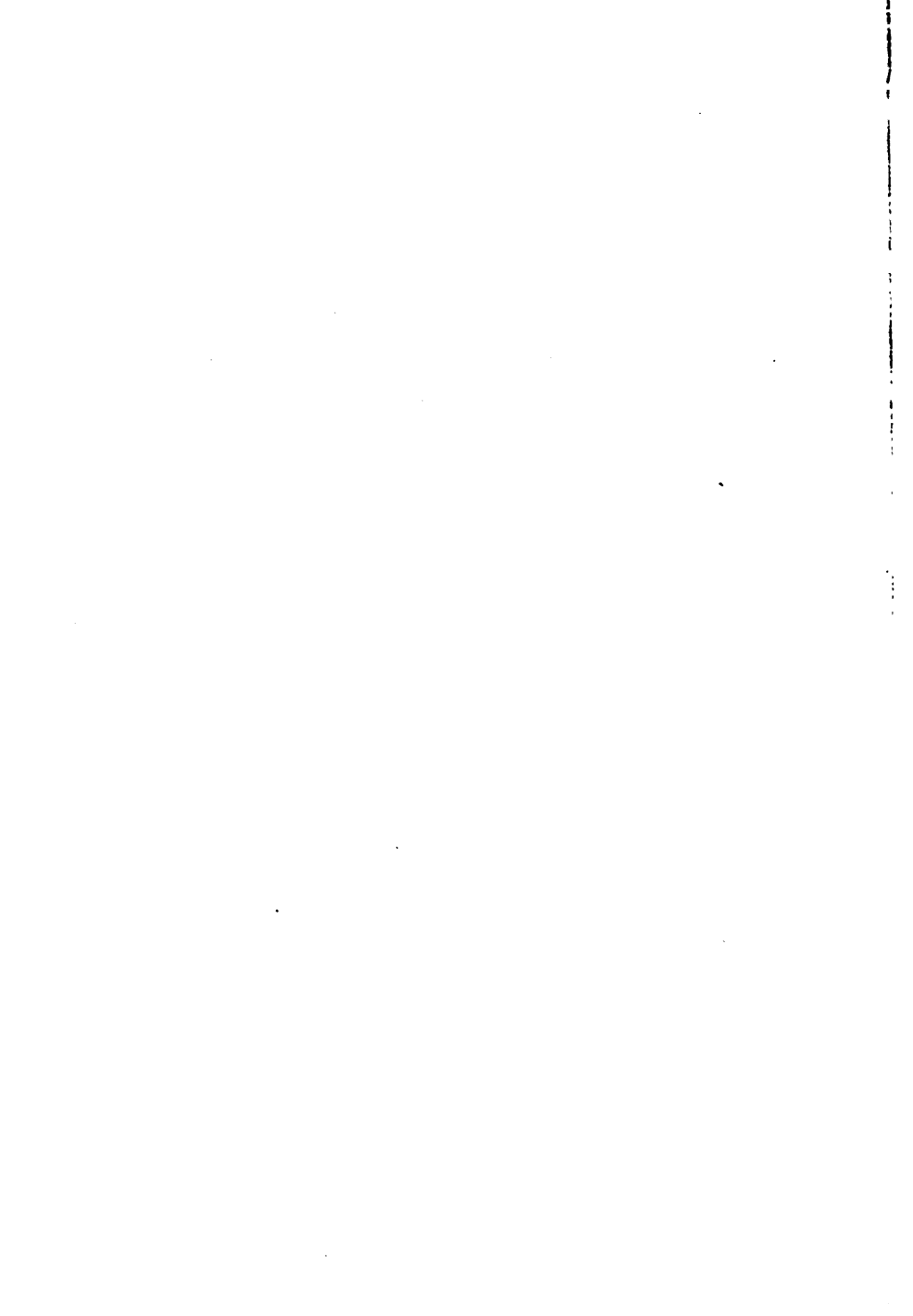
"If you can't convince *him*, you can't convince *me*," he announced. "I don't like the looks of the thing. You're trying to mislead me."

Carroll protested that he had no thought of asking anything that was wrong or unreasonable, but the justice held to his decision: he would do nothing without the recommendation of the city prosecutor. Even if his own judgment dictated the action he was asked to take, after he became conversant with all the facts, he would hesitate, for the public had become suspicious of all such things, and every public official was under scrutiny. He had been criticized in cases where his course was absolutely justified, and, no matter what his personal opinions or personal inclinations might be, he would not assume the responsibility for changing a charge except on the motion of the proper law officer.

"That means the grand jury for Haggin," growled Carroll, as he left the justice's house,



“ ‘ IF YOU CAN'T CONVINCE *HIM*, YOU CAN'T CONVINCE *ME* ’ ”



"and the grand jury for Haggin means the grand jury for other people. Confound it! Wade has got to come down to earth and do something!"

It was getting late now. Many hours had many people spent working earnestly in behalf of Dick Haggin, handy man, and he was still behind the bars. Was it possible that a spasmodic reform agitation had made the strongest "pull" valueless? Never before had it been so difficult to get "a good man" out of trouble, especially when the prosecuting witness was inclined to be so reasonable.

Wade was reading in his library when Carroll arrived in a cab, and Wade instantly surmised what was wanted. Except during a campaign, evening calls from Carroll were infrequent, and the earlier conference with Bogan was still fresh in his memory. He had expected Bogan to go to Carroll. Evidently Carroll had been unable to adjust matters.

"Wade," said Carroll, "we've got to get that man Haggin out, and I've done my share."

"You'll have to do it all," said Wade.

"The justice is all right," persisted Carroll, "but he's afraid to act alone just now. All he asks is that certain forms shall be observed. If the city prosecutor will —"

"The city prosecutor won't," interrupted Wade.

"I told Bogan that, and I mean it. I'm no angel, Carroll, but I draw the line at standing between the law and the thug."

"You've done worse," said Carroll, and Wade winced. He was an adept in the deceit and subterfuge and trickery of politics, and some of his methods of gaining power over others were not compatible with a high sense of honour, but this was quite another matter. To refuse to interfere with the administration of justice, when others did not hesitate, gave him a feeling of righteousness and made other offences seem insignificant. It was one thing to "play politics" and quite another to protect crime.

"Do you know who Haggin is?" asked Carroll, when he found that Wade did not intend to answer his last thrust.

"No, and I don't care."

"Perhaps you do," said Carroll, and his voice had a sinister tone. "Haggin is Dan Nally to some people."

Wade was startled. Dan Nally had been mixed up in some election frauds.

"The police never caught him because they never had a good description of him by that name," Carroll explained. "They know Dick Haggin, but

they don't know Dan Nally. Do you see now why Bogan is so worried? If Dan Nally talks, it's all day with Bogan and some others that you and I need."

"Let Bogan take care of himself!" exclaimed Wade. "Do you know what it means if you and I mix up in this case and the public ever finds out who the man is?"

"I know what it means if we don't," retorted Carroll. "It means that he'll talk the moment he finds he's deserted, that he'll bring in others. He won't reach you, Wade, but his friends will, and the friends of the others will. They'll know how he was sacrificed and they won't forget it. They'll know who could have saved him and them, and you won't be ace-high to a yellow dog in a district that you and I rule now."

Wade got up and walked back and forth. He had had nothing to do, even indirectly, with the frauds in question, but the district was one where men "stood by one another" and regarded inactivity as treachery. The local leaders were influential. If any one failed to be loyal to them, according to their understanding of loyalty, he would be put down as an enemy. On the other hand, the very thing that made it important to get his

man out made it dangerous to interfere. If the facts ever became known, Wade would be regarded as a party to the original fraud, and he prided himself on having "clean hands" in this respect, as he not infrequently asserted. Political expediency might point to one course, but personal inclination and safety pointed to another. The lower associations of politics were repugnant to him, anyway.

"I said before, and I say again," he announced at last, "that I won't lift a finger to protect a common thug."

"My God! Wade, can't you see the consequences?" cried Carroll.

"I don't care a rap for the consequences," retorted Wade, angrily. Then he added, more quietly: "You and I are supposed to be bosses, Carroll, but we're slaves. To hold our power we have to do a whole lot of things that we don't want to do, and that we know we ought not to do. We're slaves to the men we think we boss. We have to watch out for them, protect them, and do their bidding in most of the affairs of life, or we can't rule them in politics. That's philosophizing, Carroll, and you may not understand it, but you'll understand this: I've reached the limit; I've monkeyed with my little warped conscience all that

I dare. Bogan will have to handle his own crime business. Is that plain enough?"

"I think you're a fool," was Carroll's reply; but both men spoke bluntly in the course of their occasional disagreements, and their alliance did not suffer thereby. They could not afford to let it suffer.

Carroll abandoned active work for that night, but he did a good deal of thinking. It was a desperate situation. While he was no more implicated in the actual frauds than Wade, he had a deeper interest in the men who were implicated, and he had no scruples against interfering with the law so long as he incurred no penalty. Bogan was his kind of a man — a man whom he could use — and there were others like Bogan who were in danger. They represented a considerable element of his political strength in one district.

In consequence Carroll was astir earlier than usual the next morning, and had a brief conference with Bogan before the time for the opening of the police court. Bogan plainly showed his anxiety. The affair was beginning to look very serious, for no one could say when Dick Haggin might be recognized as Dan Nally, which would end all possibility of escape. And Haggin was in no pleasant frame

of mind. He could not understand why his release was so long delayed.

Bogan went from Carroll to the police court and drew the assistant city prosecutor to one side. Court had not yet opened, but the presecutor was looking over the docket.

"That case against Haggin," said Bogan, "is a mistake. I've explained it to the judge, and on your motion to change the charge to disorderly he'll let him go with a fine."

"It's robbery here," said the lawyer, looking at the docket, "and there's a witness against him besides the police."

"The witness won't object," asserted Bogan. "The man ought never to have been booked on that charge."

"In that case, let the justice change it," returned the lawyer.

"As a matter of form, he wants the motion to come from the prosecution," Bogan explained.

"I'm not making motions of that kind," said the lawyer.

"Wade told me to tell you it's all right," was Bogan's next cheerful lie.

The lawyer looked up at him sharply. He was grateful to Wade, and he had confidence in him.

Wade would not ask him to do anything that would get him into trouble, for he knew how small an excuse would be required to separate him from his job. And such changes were frequently justifiable. But the docket showed that the victim would appear against this man.

"Have you a note from Wade?" asked the lawyer.

"Do you think he'd put such a request in writing?" retorted Bogan, thus making a grievous mistake; for the lawyer immediately decided that the favour asked was not such an innocent one as Bogan would have it appear.

"I don't believe Wade knows anything about it," he said. "If he does, he can telephone me."

"I'll have you out of this job," threatened Bogan, losing his temper. An alderman is not accustomed to such hard knocks as this one had been receiving since the previous evening.

"For refusing to change a felony to a misdemeanour?" asked the lawyer, coolly. "In the present state of public feeling you couldn't do me a greater favour than to make the facts public."

A month before, Bogan reflected, as he hurried to Haggin's cell, the influence already brought to bear would have given freedom to half a dozen men

without the public being any the wiser for it; and now, when it was most important to secure results, a reform scare had everything tied up tight. But he spoke confidently to Haggin. The right people had taken the matter up, he said, but circumstances made it necessary to act with caution. They might have to wait until the case got out of the police court before acting. Then he took the risk of calling Wade up on the telephone.

"It's all up to you," he told him. "Everything is arranged, and a word to the prosecutor will settle the business. Shall I call him to the 'phone?"

"No," replied Wade.

Bogan tried to argue, but Wade rang off. Then Bogan swore volubly and forcefully, and the tenor of his remarks was to the effect that, no matter what happened, John Wade should have reason to regret his refusal to help out a good man. A drink in a near-by refectory served to calm the excited alderman sufficiently to enable him to return to the courtroom without exciting comment.

Even as he entered, Dick Haggin, handy man, was being held to the grand jury.

Wade breathed more easily when he heard the news. Whatever the sacrifice, he had held steadfastly to his principles, and it was somewhat pleasing

to find that he still had principles. Furthermore, he did not believe they would impose any real loss upon him. The scandal, if it came, would not touch him personally, and those most imbittered by his course were not likely to have much time for schemes of revenge. Carroll might sulk a little, merely for effect, but Carroll was a practical man who looked out for his own interests, and their alliance was not one of sentiment. Nor would the rank and file of the party in the district affected remain true very long to lost leaders of a lost cause. All in all, he could see where there was a chance of gaining, instead of losing, prestige. But Wade, the astute, overlooked one little thing: the game was not finished. Haggin was in the county jail, awaiting trial, but he was still only Haggin. Until he became Dan Nally there was hope, and hope meant earnest effort. His friends were true to him. They had been told that Wade had proved false, and Wade had felt the effect, for the local leaders, who had the deepest interest in the man's escape, were still in power. Somehow he had expected that little detail of the "machine" to crumble and give him a chance to reconstruct. If it did not, his principles were likely to weaken him more than he had anticipated. But he was sure the crash would come

in time, for Haggin would never go to the penitentiary without taking others with him. Wade had nothing personally against these men, but the view they took of his course made their political destruction necessary for his preservation. And he was surprised to find himself criticized in quarters where he had least expected it. As a matter of political expediency many of those on the inside held that Haggin should have been rescued at any cost. Of course, these were friends of others in jeopardy, but Wade did not know that the latter had friends in so many places. In brief, he began to worry.

Then came Senator Abbey post-haste from Springfield. Senator Abbey was from the district where the trouble was brewing, and he was a man of some influence in the Legislature. He worked with the "machine," but he was in a position to exercise independent judgment, and neither Carroll nor Wade could claim him as "his man." Therefore he was a man to be propitiated in any reasonable way.

Senator Abbey was white-hot when he found Wade — so hot that he did not greet him with the deference due to his party power.

"You've played hell!" he announced, shortly.

"Here's this man held to the grand jury, indicted, and his case coming to trial in a day or so, and I never heard of it until now."

"Why should you hear of it?" asked Wade.

"Why should I hear of it!" cried the Senator. "It's in my Senatorial district, isn't it? Do you think I want that torn wide open? This thing has got to be fixed!"

"Well, fix it," retorted Wade. "Some of you people seem to think you can do anything, flirt with any kind of lawlessness or crime, and then call on me. Where did you get the idea that I was under the orders of every fool who wants to make a convenience of me?"

"You're a nice kind of a man to be asking favours of the party!" exclaimed the Senator, sarcastically. "What kind of a chance do you think you've got of going to the United States Senate? Why, a turtle could make a better run than you after this!"

"Who said I wanted to go to the Senate?" demanded Wade.

"Oh, it isn't generally known, but there are a few wise ones at Springfield who can see things when their eyes are open," returned the Senator. "You haven't been framing things up for the mere joy

of doing it. But there's one thing sure: you can straighten this tangle or consider eight or ten votes lost to you at the very least. You know *me!*"

Senator Abbey quiescent would count for only one vote, but Senator Abbey active could ring up several votes one way or the other. He was strong in the State Senate, and the members of the Lower House from the same district would feel much as he did, and be guided largely by his course. Another election would intervene before the culmination of Wade's plan; but some, and possibly all, of these men would be returned. Abbey would be reelected almost to a certainty, even if the power of some of the district leaders crumbled.

Wade thought of all this as he looked dreamily out of the window. He had not expected Springfield to take so deep an interest in the matter, and it made his "principles" look more costly than he had believed possible. The one great ambition of his life might rest on the decision of that moment.

"Are you with me?" he asked at last.

"Conditionally," replied the Senator, and Wade nodded. He knew what it meant. Politics is like speculation on a board of trade; it does not take a spoken or a written word to make a bargain. "You

will be stronger in the Legislature and in my district than you ever were before," the Senator added.

"The case will come to trial before Judge Lamson," Wade mused. "Lamson is one of the few politicians on the bench. Lamson is ambitious. Lamson is always grateful for favours yet to come. Lamson knows how he happens to be a judge. I shall lunch with Lamson to-morrow, Senator, and I shall be glad to see you a little later."

The Senator was on hand promptly, and he found Wade in a reflective mood.

"I am a boss," said Wade, with whimsical bitterness. "The newspapers say so and the people say so. I rule, but there is no man among those I rule who has not more independence than I. The one little principle that I had nurtured for my own gratification is taken from me by a common thug. I bow supinely to him; he is my master."

"What becomes of him?" broke in the Senator.

"Oh, as to that," replied Wade, "he has been wise to keep his mouth shut so long. Bogan and Bradley can work a pardon from the House of Correction, and that's where he will be sent. Somehow the judge does not seem to think him a proper candidate for the penitentiary. The judge is a

warm-hearted and sympathetic man, Senator, and he knows how to change the necessary switch to run a fellow off the penitentiary track. He has done it before."

V.

A STRATEGICAL DEFEAT

BEN CARROLL was a warrior, John Wade was a strategist, and Helen R. Trumbull was a very clever woman. It naturally followed that there was trouble when their interests clashed.

Secure in his own strength, Carroll was rough and aggressive. He had no use for women in politics, and he had no hesitation in saying so. Wade took much the same view of the matter, but he did not say so. When there were enemies to be made, Wade was quite willing to permit Carroll to do the making. It was not that Wade could not be forceful and uncompromising when there was occasion, for he had tamed many strong men, but he chose to avoid the necessity as far as possible. Carroll said they didn't want any petticoats mixed up in State politics, while Wade used more diplomatic language.

"In politics," said Wade, "women may be

divided into three classes. First, there is the politician, and there is no more unscrupulous politician living than an ambitious woman. Second, there is the impressionable dame who acts on impulse, and no living man can tell what she will do in any situation. Third, there is the aggressively independent creature who believes in herself absolutely, and you might as well talk to a stone wall as to talk to her after her mind is made up. The first is treacherous, the second is unreliable, and the third is uncertain."

"To which class does this Mrs. Trumbull belong?" asked Carroll.

"The third, I think," replied Wade. "I do not understand that she has any wish to rival man in politics, so you won't find her scheming for personal or party advantage, and she is not the kind of a woman who will judge of a measure by the smile or the moustache or the deferential manner of the man who introduces it. So she must come in the third classification. She has been quite active in charitable matters, and is on the boards of several institutions. She is not going to be easy to convince."

"Why nominate her?" asked Carroll.

"Her husband," said Wade, "is John N. Trum-

bull, and you don't have to be told that John N. Trumbull is a man of considerable influence. John is very proud of his wife. Some men prefer to keep their wives out of public life, but John doesn't. A few years ago he might have taken a different view of the thing, but she has gained an enviable reputation as a woman of sense, practical sympathies, and executive ability. It cannot be denied that she has done a great deal of good in educational and charitable lines, and he has come to think that her election as a trustee of the State University would be no more than a fitting recognition of her services. It is an honour that he wishes her to have. Now, you may think it wise to offend John, but I don't. Besides, we have no great use for the Board of Trustees of the State University."

"There is something doing there once in awhile," grumbled Carroll.

"Nothing of any great importance," returned Wade. "And you ought to be the last man to create any disturbance at this time, Carroll. It is your plan to nominate Tim Mather for Clerk of the State Supreme Court, and there is going to be the devil of a row over that. Tim is no man for the place. He hasn't the kind of a record that will make the judges trust him, for the clerk of that

court has the custody of decisions, and advance knowledge of them that can be used advantageously in some instances. There will be a great roar about that. I have an idea that nothing but the presence of Trumbull's wife on the same ticket will keep Trumbull's mouth shut. He will hesitate to be very aggressive when success depends so largely on you."

"You have a great head, Wade," Carroll asserted, admiringly.

So Helen R. Trumbull became a trustee of the State University, and Tim Mather became Clerk of the State Supreme Court, but in both cases there was dissatisfaction. The outcry against Mather was long and loud, but Trumbull's voice was not heard in public, although privately he was very bitter. As he was a lawyer, he had a deeper interest in the matter than many others who did not hesitate to make themselves heard.

"Why don't you speak out?" some one asked him during the campaign.

"What's the use?" he replied, weakly, "the nomination is made. Of course I shall vote against him."

"Will you authorize me to make that fact public?"

"No-o. It wouldn't do any good. He'll run behind the ticket, but he can't fail to be elected."

In the case of Mrs. Trumbull, there could be no doubt of the dissatisfaction of Carroll. He permitted her to be nominated as a matter of political expediency, but the permission was not given graciously. He was not a successful dissembler, even when he saw the wisdom of trying to dissemble, and he was in no sense a ladies' man. In his effort to hide the fact that he was not at ease in the society of ladies he was brusque almost to the point of discourtesy, thinking that he thereby gave an impression of independence and strength. Mrs. Trumbull saw little of him, and she was not favourably impressed by the little she saw. There was nothing personal in his ill-concealed feeling of antagonism, for she had heard him excuse another's affront to a woman then serving on the board, by asking, roughly, "Well, what's she doing in politics, anyway?" By nature and training he was opposed to the whole idea, but he had to be quiescent. Trustees were elected for a term of six years, a third of the full board of nine being named at each biennial election, and a precedent had been established for putting up one woman and two men each time. Carroll felt that this "fool precedent," as he termed it, robbed

him of some of the fruits of political success, but Wade had made it plain that Mrs. Trumbull would have to be accepted in this instance. So Carroll remained passive, although his resentment was not unobserved by those most interested.

Wade, on the other hand, made the best of the situation. He also preferred men to women in politics, and he also feared that Mrs. Trumbull would prove a very difficult proposition, but the office was politically unimportant, and there was no reason to believe that any of his plans ever would depend upon her influence or vote. The custody and investment of the funds of the university involved some business favours that it was within the power of the board to grant or withhold, and there was a trifling amount of patronage connected with the business administration of the institution, but for the practical politician there was little to be expected. So, when Wade discovered that John Trumbull was ambitious for his wife, he readily saw that greater advantage lay in championing her cause than in opposing it. The nomination would be a popular one — so popular, in fact, that it would require considerable work to defeat it, and the man responsible for defeat would incur the enmity of many women, and of at least one man

with influence. While Wade was opposed to woman in politics, he knew the advantage of having the championship of the woman who passes her sentiments to her husband with his breakfast coffee. She does not care much about voting, but whenever she feels deeply, her views are very likely to be reflected by some one who does vote. Wade wanted to stand well in her estimation, and he wanted to stand well in the estimation of John Trumbull. He saw the course events were taking some time before he had his conversation with Carroll, and he straightway made arrangements to be the first at the goal. In other words, having learned how Mr. Trumbull felt about it before any definite plans were made, he hastened to suggest Mrs. Trumbull's candidacy.

"To be a trustee of the State University," he told Trumbull, "is an honour of which any woman may well be proud. There has been some incidental mention of your wife in that connection, but nothing definite as yet."

"I believe there has been some talk of it at the Woman's Club," admitted Trumbull, beaming with gratification.

"An indorsement by the Woman's Club would be an excellent thing," returned Wade, "but it isn't

really necessary. Your wife is so widely and favourably known as a result of her charitable work, that she practically has the indorsement of the whole public. If I have your assurance that she will accept the nomination, I think that I can promise you positively that it will be given to her. At any rate, I shall be glad to interest myself actively in the matter, for I am one of her sincere admirers."

With years of training Carroll would not have been equal to this bit of diplomacy, and Wade had not deemed it necessary to tell him about it when explaining why the nomination would have to be made. There were other and better ways of inducing Carroll to take the right view of the matter. But Wade had made his point; he had earned the gratitude of a valuable man simply by making the best of an unsatisfactory situation, and he followed this up by making a favourable impression upon the valuable man's wife. It was a comparatively small matter; there were other nominations in which both he and Carroll had a much deeper interest; but Wade had gained many advantages by giving attention to the minor details of a campaign. So far as outward bearing went, he was a gentleman. The exigencies of practical politics might lead him to do a great many ungentlemanly

things, but he knew how to be deferential and courteous, and he exerted himself to the utmost to be "clever" to Mrs. Trumbull in the little intercourse he had with her during and after the campaign. He made helpful suggestions, he exerted himself to be obliging, he was the first to congratulate her on her nomination, and the first to send her definite news of her election, he adjourned a committee meeting when he learned that she was waiting to see him, he arranged for an informal conference with other members of the Board of Trustees.

"I have heard such disagreeable things about him," she told her husband, "that it is a delightful surprise to find him so much of a gentleman. He is totally unlike that uncouth Carroll."

But Mrs. Trumbull could be gracious without being weak. She showed her appreciation of courtesies extended without being blind to the duties of her position. She had been elected to office to use her own judgment, and she would not accept any one's assurance that "it's all right." She wanted to know for herself the reason for this or that action; she had to be convinced, and she was not easy to convince. Those who had dealings with the board found her as coldly practical as a man, and she had

the advantage of being able to give her whole time to her duties, while the men had other interests to claim the greater share of their attention. They did not think they were careless, but they were, for they did not seek to remedy the unbusinesslike conditions that they found to exist. Why should they? No one was complaining, and it was much easier to accept things as they were.

To attempt any radical change would be a thankless task, calling for time and labour on the part of some individual member of the board, and there was no feeling of individual responsibility. An impersonal board was responsible. An impersonal board can follow the methods of other impersonal boards when an individual would not dare to do so. And some members of this board had been slightly inoculated with the germ of politics.

But Mrs. Trumbull cared nothing at all about politics, and she did care about investigating everything that was to be investigated. The university trusteeship was no minor consideration with her; it was all-important. She worried the men.

"I would like to know more about the finances of the institution," she announced one day.

"We have the treasurer's report," explained one of the other trustees.

"The treasurer is a private banker," she returned. "He is supposed to have in his possession valuable negotiable securities belonging to the university. Has he got them?"

"Why, of course."

"I'd like to see them." Some of the other trustees looked disgusted and weary.

"As near as I can make out," Mrs. Trumbull went on, "the auditing of the treasurer's reports has been no more than a formality for several years. We are informed that he has made certain investments, that he holds various securities, but what proof is there of it?"

"Interest and dividends have been paid promptly."

"Well, I'd like to see something that represents the principal," she asserted.

"I have no doubt," said Trustee Atkinson, sarcastically, "that if Mrs. Trumbull will go to Mr. Hackley at his Chicago bank, he will be pleased to give her all the evidence necessary to reassure her. But I am willing to rely on his business reputation, backed by his bond as treasurer."

Mrs. Trumbull looked to see whether she had the support of any other trustee, but one only was

nodding gravely and thoughtfully, and even he did not speak.

"Very well," she said at last. "I shall object to accepting the treasurer's report until this board knows of its own knowledge that the securities are where they are supposed to be, and I shall make public the reasons for my action."

There was a mild sensation when a rumour of what had happened at the university reached Chicago. Action on the treasurer's report had been deferred for two weeks, and an effort was made to hush the matter up temporarily, but a hint was given to some of those interested. Wade only laughed, but Carroll swore. Carroll received his first information from Treasurer Hackley, and Treasurer Hackley was very excited.

"It will bust the bank," he said.

"What!" cried Carroll, "haven't you got those securities?"

"Not all of them," replied Hackley, "but I'll have them within sixty days. I used them to secure a claim that was making trouble for me—just to tide over, you know. It's been a pretty hard time for the small banks, and I had some losses, but I'm coming out all right now. Just keep her away for sixty days. You can do it."

"Not for me!" retorted Carroll. "You don't catch me in any banking scandals. It's risky enough for me in politics."

"You're on my bond, Carroll," suggested Hackley.

"I'd like to break your neck!" roared Carroll.

"I gave you a little stock for your good offices in that and some other matters," persisted Hackley. "If I go up now, you're caught two ways — as a stockholder in the bank and as one of my bondsmen. You'd better see what you can do."

Carroll said many harsh things, but he went to the bank with Hackley and investigated the situation. He didn't know much about banking, but there seemed to be a fair chance for Hackley to pull through, and Carroll promised to see what could be done. A little delay, he told himself, might enable him to get rid of his interest in the bank, and possibly would give him a chance to get off the bond. But it would not do for him to appear in the matter personally.

Carroll went to Wade first, for he fully appreciated the fact that Wade was the strategist and possessed the ingenious resourcefulness necessary in such a situation. He stated frankly that he wanted the proposed investigation postponed. Wade

did not ask why; he could make a good guess, and it occurred to him that his time had come to speak out plainly. He knew inferentially that what was asked of him was not honest, but he could easily console what was left of his conscience with the thought that it might save the bank and the bank's depositors. Besides, he was ready to sacrifice something in playing for a big stake.

"There are three ways that it might be done, but none of them is sure," he said.

"What are they?" asked Carroll. "I can think of only one."

Wade waited a moment, and then asked, "What do I get out of it, Carroll?"

"You know you can count on me for anything," replied Carroll.

"I know that I can count on you for anything that you can't dodge," retorted Wade. "I haven't forgotten how you tried to turn me down in that Craig matter."

"Ancient history," asserted Carroll. "What do you want?"

"I want to be United States Senator," said Wade, deliberately. "You know that."

"I've seen some indications of it," admitted Carroll. "A fellow who's watching politics gets

to know things without being told. But that's for the next Legislature to settle."

"No, it isn't," returned Wade. "It's for you and me to settle right now. I've got things pretty well framed up, Carroll, — better than you know, — and I think I can make it. But I want you to take off your coat and work for me; I want your men in the next Legislature to be my men."

Carroll scowled and hesitated, for certain of his personal plans were affected.

"I'm pretty friendly to the man who wants to succeed himself," he said, finally.

"No, you're not," retorted Wade, decisively. "You're pretty friendly to Ben Carroll, and you don't want to commit yourself until you see where you can make the best deal. You think it's a little early to tie yourself up, Carroll, but you've got to do it."

The two men looked at each other as if each would penetrate the inmost thoughts of the other. Perhaps they did. At any rate, the moment of silence seemed to clear the situation.

"Fix this thing up," said Carroll, "and I'll be with you. What are the three ways?"

"First, get a majority of the board on your side," explained Wade. "Most of the members are satis-

fied and do not want to be bothered, but the easiest way to settle a disagreeable matter is to agree with Mrs. Trumbull. Still, if one of them suggested a specific date for an annual examination of the finances of the institution, it may not be difficult to compromise on that basis, and the date could be put far enough ahead to suit your purpose. Second, discourage Mrs. Trumbull. If she should drop the matter, no one else would press it. Third, get Hackley out of the way before any demand can be made on him. The third is a last resort, for it would create disagreeable comment, but it would be temporarily effective. The securities and accounts are in his personal custody and not in the custody of the bank."

"I don't like that plan," said Carroll, for he feared that, although there was no suspicion as yet, Hackley's absence might create one. Besides, Hackley's presence might be necessary to adjust matters at his bank. "How would you discourage Mrs. Trumbull?"

"She is more interested in her charities than in anything else," said Wade. Then he added, significantly: "A county board member was complaining the other day of the number of waifs the Home for Women has been delivering to the county."

The Home for Women has a children's ward that is overcrowded, but the county has nothing to do with that. The doorstep of the Home for Women seems to be a favourite place for those who wish to desert babies. Why should the county take them? Mrs. Trumbull would do almost anything rather than have her pet institution and the babies suffer."

"That ought to bring her to time, if she understood it," admitted Carroll, "and she could be made to understand it through her husband. Higbie could see to that. And she can't expect us to be clever to her if she makes trouble for us. But — well, I'd rather do it some other way."

"I'm advising nothing," said Wade. "It's an ugly situation for you, and I'm telling you what can be done. The better way, of course, is to work it through the Board of Trustees, for I can help you personally in that plan."

As a result of the details Wade then gave various things happened. Carroll had an unsatisfactory talk with Trustee Atkinson.

"It's foolishness, of course," said Atkinson, "but she has made such a rumpus about it that I don't care to take the lead in any plan to postpone an investigation, but you can count on my vote."

Higbie, acting under Carroll's instructions, had

even less success with Trustee Jarvis, the man who had given Mrs. Trumbull slight encouragement by the grave and thoughtful way he had listened to her at the previous meeting of the board.

"Mrs. Trumbull asked me," said Jarvis, "if I would be satisfied with such methods in my own business, and I had to admit that I would not. In view of the circumstances I have decided that I will vote for an immediate and thorough auditing by the full board. It is a good idea to make it an annual affair, but I shall be with Mrs. Trumbull in her present demand."

Higbie also went to see Mr. Trumbull, but the latter seemed to be only amused.

"If you think my wife is acting under my advice," he said, "you are mistaken. I have given her certain information in relation to business methods, when she has asked for it, but that is all. She is running this thing herself, and she's a pretty smart woman. I may say that I admire her myself," and Mr. Trumbull chuckled pleasantly. It was a good joke to him, but not to the others.

"Good Lord!" cried Carroll, "is one woman better and stronger than three men? Doesn't our experience count for anything? Are we to be crowded off the political earth by a bunch of petti-

coats that doesn't know a ward meeting from a charity board? Well, it's up to you, Wade."

So Wade went to see his country legislative friend, Azro Craig, who happened to be very close to Trustee Breen. But Craig had become suspicious.

"You're all right, Jack," he said, "but you got your fingers in too many pies. Why don't you let folks look after their own business?"

Wade made a feeble explanation to the effect that Mrs. Trumbull was unreasonable and that she would have to be tamed in this instance or she would keep the university board in a turmoil all the time.

"I ain't never got so foolish as to go into the business of tamin' women," retorted Craig.

Wade persisted. There was nothing at stake, he said, except a question of precedent and policy, and all that was necessary was to get some one like Breen to take the initiative. If Mrs. Trumbull won now, it never would be possible to hold her down to systematic procedure; she would follow an erratic fancy in everything and become a disturbing element.

"When a lot of men are ag'in one woman," said Craig, "I'm with the woman, an' I'm ashamed o' you for bein' with the men. You ain't honest,

either. You got reasons you ain't tellin' for mixin' up here, an' I won't have nothin' to do with it."

It was a crestfallen trio that assembled in Chicago when Wade made his report. Carroll kept muttering: "Three men against one woman, and the men are powerless! Three wise politicians turned down by a bunch of skirts!" Then he insisted desperately that something had to be done immediately, for the next meeting of the trustees was to be held in Chicago, instead of at the university, within three days, and there was a chance that they might go in a body to the bank. That was unlikely, but they would almost certainly make some arrangement for the examination of the securities.

"Tell Hackley to pack his grip," said Wade, taking command, as he usually did at a critical moment; "get immediate action on your waif proposition, and I will see Mrs. Trumbull. It's a risk, but I may be able to do something."

Wade had so successfully concealed his own machinations that he was still on the most friendly terms with Mrs. Trumbull, and he went to her ostensibly as a friend.

"I may seem presumptuous, Mrs. Trumbull," he told her, "but I can't help giving you a word of warning. Frankly, there is a feeling that you are

making a great deal of unnecessary trouble. In your main contention you are quite right, but you must have seen that even the trustees were disturbed by your aggressiveness."

"I don't want to be unreasonable," she replied, "but why should there be any objection to a proper auditing of accounts?"

"There is none," he explained. "I have been at some pains to investigate the matter, and I think I understand it. By a little conciliation you can get just what you wish without stirring up a spirit of antagonism. Men don't like to be forced, especially by one of less practical experience than themselves. These are not my sentiments, Mrs. Trumbull; I am merely explaining the situation. Now, if you will drop this matter temporarily, there will be no objection to an arrangement for a thorough annual auditing a little later. All can join in such a movement a little more gracefully then. I admit that your position is impregnable, and you can easily force action at the next meeting, for the public might misinterpret a refusal, but you will surely create a bitterness that will be hurtful. The trustees won't like it, and Mr. Hackley's many friends will believe you are deliberately assailing his integrity. You will find them retaliating in unexpected ways."

"I don't want to be unreasonable," Mrs. Trumbull said again, "and I don't see why this matter should make such a stir. But, if the dignity of my masculine friends on the board demands it, I will let the matter go over temporarily, provided Mr. Hackley gives a new and suitable bond immediately."

A smile of satisfaction faded quickly from Wade's face at the conclusion of this statement, and he hastily asked what was the matter with the bond.

"It isn't large enough," replied Mrs. Trumbull. "The amount was fixed when the funds and securities in his custody were far less than they are now. And it isn't good enough, either. No bank or trust company would accept it for half the amount, for it would be a difficult matter to collect on it. The only surety who really has anything is Carroll, and he's too tricky to be safe. Oh, I know about that bond; I asked my husband a few questions, and then I had it looked up."

"I don't think there will be any trouble about the bond," said Wade. "You might suggest it at the next meeting of the trustees, and no doubt it will be easily arranged, if the other matter is dropped."

Mrs. Trumbull turned suddenly on Wade.

"Are you representing Mr. Hackley?" she asked.

"Not at all," he answered. "I merely thought that my practical experience in public matters might be of some value to you."

"It is," she said, "and I am grateful to you for your advice, although I don't understand the reason for some of it. But this thing is sure: Mr. Hackley will have to furnish a new and larger bond at the next meeting of the trustees, or I shall stick to my original demand. I shall see that he is notified of my intention in time to have the bond ready. I don't like some things about this at all, Mr. Wade."

"I don't blame you," replied Wade, promptly. "It is making a big thing out of a trifle in which you are technically right but diplomatically wrong."

Wade knew enough to say no more than that. It would do no good, and he had no wish to lose Mrs. Trumbull's friendship. But he told Carroll and Higbie that three experienced politicians were dangerously near to defeat by one comparatively inexperienced woman.

"I'd rather tackle six men than one woman," he said.

"Make it twenty men," growled Carroll. "Why, just look at it. On that board there are six men and three women. One of the women takes the bit in her teeth, and the six men can't hold her. There

are three more men right here, and they can't hold her. Enough influences have been at work to swing a Legislature, and she's dragging the whole bunch like so much tissue-paper. No one wants to do what she says, but every one is going to do it — except the other women, perhaps. We ought to have got after the other women, Wade. We tried all the men that we dared."

"Well, it's too late now," returned Wade. "How about the waifs?"

"That's fixed," replied Carroll. "She'll have enough to worry her pretty soon so that she may be willing to forget about Hackley."

In truth, Mrs. Trumbull did have her hands full the next day. Before she had finished breakfast she had a telephone call from the Home for Women, and was informed that the county had refused to accept a waif that had been left on the doorstep the preceding evening.

"What do you suppose is the reason of that?" she asked her husband.

"It looks to me like a bit of practical politics," he replied. "I believe you've been rather unaccommodating, haven't you?"

"Are they mean enough to retaliate on the babies?" she cried.

"They may take the view that they are letting the fate of the babies rest on you," he suggested.

"Oh, they are!" she cried, with flashing eyes. "Well, it's a despicable, mean, cowardly thing to do, and I won't stand it for a minute!"

"Don't," he advised, laughing; for her aggressive resourcefulness was a source of both amusement and pride to him. His best advice was always at her service, but he insisted upon taking a facetious view of most of her problems. "Go after them!" he added. "My! but I'd hate to be the President of the County Board to-day!"

Mrs. Trumbull went straight to the Home for Women, where she learned that the police, to whom it was customary to deliver waifs thus left, had refused to take this one. Then, accompanied by various other members of the board, she went to the police station, where she was informed that the police had no place for them, and the county would no longer take them. The police were thereupon absolved from all blame. They were willing to send for them whenever the county would take them.

There were many indignant women at the conference that followed, but none was more indignant than Mrs. Trumbull, the chairman of the Board of Directors for the Home for Women, for she felt

a sense of personal responsibility. She could not get rid of the idea of "retaliation," although she could not see just what influences were at work. She thought she knew, but she could not trace the connection. She was full of determination, however; she positively would not be defeated by any such trifling trick. When Mrs. Trumbull was full of determination she was capable of strikingly original and effective action, and the other women laughed until the tears rolled down their cheeks when she outlined her plan.

The County Board had a meeting that afternoon. It had just been called to order when word was brought in that some ladies wished to see the President. Would they come in? No; there were a number of them, and they would consider it a favour if he would step to the door. He went, followed by various curious members, and found a group of women in the corridor, but he did not see that they cleverly concealed a nurse with a baby.

"Have you refused to accept any more foundlings from the Home for Women?" asked Mrs. Trumbull.

"Yes," he replied.

"Why?"



"WE DELIVER THAT FOUNDLING TO YOU AS THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE COUNTY,"
SHE SAID "



"Well, the county institutions are already pretty full."

"But it is the duty of the county to take charge of the waifs."

He laughed uneasily.

"Theoretically, that may be true," he admitted, "but I do not see why we should take them from such an institution as yours."

"We have very limited accommodations for babies and children," she explained. "It is a private charity that does the very best it can, but there are five times as many foundlings left there as we can possibly provide for."

"Well," he said, "if the county won't take them, I don't see what you are going to do about it."

Mrs. Trumbull turned, took the baby from the nurse and handed it to the President of the County Board. The action was so sudden that he had the little one in his arms before he realized what had happened.

"We deliver that foundling to you as the representative of the county," she said.

He tried to give it back, but every woman had her hands behind her. And the men laughed.

"Take it," he pleaded. "I don't know what to do with it."

"The county does," said Mrs. Trumbull.

"But what can I do with it now?" he argued, plaintively.

"That's your affair," Mrs. Trumbull replied, and the women turned to leave.

"Wait!" he cried, following them, while his colleagues almost collapsed with laughter, and the child began to cry. "Take it — only take it now, and the county will send for it."

"How about others in the future?" demanded Mrs. Trumbull.

"The county will take them all, every one," he promised. "We'll send chariots for them, if you say so."

The nurse took the baby at a sign from Mrs. Trumbull, and the women retired, but the news of their exploit travelled rapidly. Wade simply had to laugh when the story came to him, although he appreciated the gravity of the situation. He was in conference with Carroll and Hackley at the time. Hackley should have left town the night before, but he had delayed, and in consequence Mrs. Trumbull's notice in relation to the demand for a new bond had reached him. It would never do to leave now.

"It's just as well, anyway," he was saying, bitterly. "I've got to stay here to avoid a wreck.

I tell you, less than sixty days will make me all right, but I've got to manage things myself. I've got one investment that will pull me out as soon as the deal goes through. You know what it is, Carroll, for you — "

Then it was that Higbie entered with the news.

"When it comes to strategy," commented Wade, "give me a woman every time. You're beaten, Carroll."

"How about you?" demanded Carroll.

"Oh, my skirts are clear of scandal," replied Wade. "I'm not in the bank." But he knew he was hurt in another way.

Then Hackley pulled himself together and spoke almost fiercely.

"You've got to see me through, Carroll!" he said. "You're in the bank, and you're on my bond. You'll be hit politically and financially if I go down. It isn't much of an interest that you have in the bank, but the books show that you got it without the payment of a cent of cash. A new bond is out of the question just now; I have got to produce the securities, and *you* have got to redeem them for me."

"Have I?" fumed Carroll.

"I think you have," put in Wade.

"Then I can resign with dignity," added Hackley. "You've got the cash, or can raise it, Carroll, and you know on what I rely to pay —"

"A speculation!" interrupted Carroll. "It looks good, but —"

"But you've got to take the risk," interrupted Wade. "Hackley is quite right about that."

Carroll gave Wade an angry look, but he surrendered to the inevitable and the details were settled.

"Woman in politics is an expensive luxury," he growled, when the matter had been arranged.

"She is," admitted Wade; for had not Wade lost a grip on some votes just when he thought he was sure of them?

VI.

A FAVOUR FOR A FRIEND

BEN CARROLL was worried. When anything of a political or legislative nature worried Ben Carroll, he usually sought out John Wade. Wade could do things that Carroll could not, but he would not always do them. Carroll feared that this might be one of the things at which Wade would balk, for the fact that there was boodle in it could not be concealed from so experienced a politician. Wade, financially honest himself, shut his eyes to boodling frequently, but his influence and advice could be secured only when it was very much to his political advantage. Carroll could not see how the thing he had in mind was going to be to Wade's advantage in any way.

"I'll have to put up a strong bluff," said Carroll to himself. "I can threaten to break with him and rip open some of his schemes. But he's got to help me. He's the only man who can put up the right kind of a game for this job."

So Carroll went to Wade.

"I've got to get Duncan's vote," he said.

"A hard job, if the measure isn't straight," commented Wade.

"I know it," admitted Carroll, "but you can land it, if you try."

"What's the scheme?" asked Wade.

Carroll explained it fully, and Wade gave him a shrewd look. "You ought to get enough out of that to retire, if you put it through," remarked Wade.

"Oh, I'm doing it for a friend," explained Carroll.

"Your pocketbook is your friend," returned Wade.

Carroll knew that a denial would be wasted, so he said nothing. He was holding himself for what he termed "a strong talk," when that became necessary, and he fully expected that it would be necessary. In fact, he was rather surprised that Wade would even make a pretence of considering the matter. Still, Wade was always cautious, seeking to understand a question thoroughly before reaching a decision. But this seemed to be something that he ought to understand promptly.

"Why do you particularly need Duncan's vote?"

asked Wade, after a moment of silence. "Why will not some other do just as well?"

"We do not need Duncan's vote so much as we do an assurance that he won't antagonize us," was Carroll's reply. "Duncan is a dangerous man, a vicious fighter."

"No doubt about that," admitted Wade.

"We want him for us because we don't want him against us, and he's sure to be one or the other. He might bust the whole thing."

"He might," admitted Wade. "Possibly some of your men would not stand well under fire."

Carroll nodded, to indicate that this was the situation. Wade was silent for awhile, considering the matter.

"Well, Carroll," he said at last, with a significant smile, "as you're doing this for a friend, I suppose I ought to be willing to do as much. As a favour to a friend I'll try to get your man for you."

Carroll was surprised at this ready acquiescence, and not wholly untroubled by it. He had anticipated difficulty in securing Wade's coöperation.

"I wonder," he soliloquized, "what his game is. There is surely something in it for him somewhere."

Meanwhile, Wade was buried in thought and

cigar smoke. The task he had undertaken was a difficult one, requiring careful planning and skilful execution. In a little time, however, he perfected a scheme that seemed to promise well.

His first act was to make, through Carroll, certain preliminary arrangements with the men who were behind Carroll; and, to do this, he had to take Carroll partly into his confidence. He regretted the necessity, for Carroll was not a discreet man, to be trusted in a matter requiring such delicate handling as this; but it could not be helped. Carroll, strong politically in many ways, was a bungler when it came to the clever manipulation of intelligent men. However, in this case, he promised to say and do nothing.

Next, Wade sought a certain middle-aged, sedate man, with whom he had had dealings in the past.

"It is just the job for you," explained Wade. "You're not known, and no one else can play the part. Here's where your book-knowledge comes into play."

"It would be interesting," admitted the man, "but I don't like it. Duncan is too fine a man."

"That's what makes it interesting," urged Wade. "The job requires cleverness. Still, the ethical points of the scheme need not worry you, for

all you've got to do is to sell him some land. Will you do it, Denton? I've been a pretty good friend to you, haven't I?"

"It certainly would be interesting," repeated Denton.

"And there's money in it," added Wade.

Denton was always hard up. He was naturally a student, delighted in odd researches, but he never had been able to make learning pay. His quick brain, however, had been of use to Wade on several occasions — he knew how to find, absorb, and arrange anything that ever had been in print — and the campaign material he had occasionally provided had been of immense value. He could get the salient points in legislation for a period of years, or in a man's record, and serve them up as a scathing arraignment or a flattering eulogy. People often wondered at the force and strength with which Wade was able to express himself in an emergency. At other times he seemed to lack this brilliancy entirely. But Wade was asking service of an entirely different nature now.

"A lot of money in it," said Wade, after waiting for Denton to speak.

"Well, I'll try it," Denton decided.

"And remember," said Wade, "I want this man.

The fact that he votes for this measure is not enough: I shall want to use him later. Do you see the point?"

"I think so."

"With reasonably clever management, you ought to be able to turn over to me evidence of the conditions under which you get him."

Denton looked up, troubled.

"You know I'm honest," declared Wade, defensively. Financial honesty was all that Wade ever considered. "I shall need his vote later; that's all," he added. "You recollect, you got the facts that enabled me to force Niedler into line once. This is really the same kind of a case, only it requires a little more work and a little more caution."

This was sophistical and fallacious, and Denton knew it. The two cases were entirely dissimilar, for Niedler had been controlled by unearthing certain previous acts, while Duncan's past life was unassailable. Nevertheless, Denton decided that he was not called upon to pass upon the ethical features of the affair, but only to do the work and earn the money. With the results of this work he was not concerned.

"It will be most interesting," he said for the

third time; "really quite exciting in a mild way. I always did like games of cleverness."

Professor Ernest Cushing was writing a book. Professor Ernest Cushing somewhat resembled a certain Ernest Denton of Chicago, but that, of course, is a matter of no importance. The exact nature of the book Professor Cushing did not divulge, but he intimated that some considerable research was required to get the necessary material, and he devoted a great deal of time to poring over dusty volumes in the library at the State capital. Occasionally he sought advice. He desired light on some obscure point in the political history of the State, and he turned to any one who happened to be near for information. Where could he find a record of the desired facts? He seemed to think that every one at the capital, except himself, must be familiar with the library and all the departments.

"I don't know much about politics," he would explain, "but perhaps it is just as well. The expert in any line writes only for the experts: no other can understand him, for he cannot appreciate the ignorance of the general public. One must not be too far removed from the people he wishes to address. Now, I have a fair general knowledge

of my purpose, — possibly an expert knowledge of some features of it, — but the difficulties I experience in mastering many details should put me in sympathy with the unposted reader and enable me to write a popular book.”

It was evident from this that his work had something to do with State political history, but other questions indicated researches in other directions also. However, there was nothing in this to disturb the legislators, or, in fact, any one with whom he came in contact, so they accepted him as a kindly, unsophisticated and interesting man, with a hobby.

And interesting he proved to be. He could talk entertainingly on many subjects, while his dreamy, unsuspecting nature made him a refreshing companion in a city where nearly all others were suspicious and severely practical.

In time Senator Horace Duncan came to regard him as a sort of protégé. The Senator rather enjoyed explaining the practical features of politics and statesmanship to him, for he was a modest and delightful listener, and his expressions of surprise and admiration at the extent of the Senator's knowledge in these directions were gratifying to the vanity of even a prominent man in State and party councils. The Professor's modesty and con-

sideration for others would not permit him to seek the Senator out, but he plainly showed his pleasure when the Senator came to him in the library, and he frequently asked his advice about knotty points in his investigations. The Senator was a man of learning himself, and was in the habit of using the library more than any of his colleagues. Consequently, there was a bond of sympathy between the two.

One day the Senator found the Professor studying a map of the State, and he asked, jokingly, if geography was to be a feature of the book also.

"Not exactly a feature," replied the Professor, "but one must be familiar with the geography of the State that he writes about, and, besides, I have been about all over it in my researches. Ichthyology is one of my hobbies. I presume I have visited every fish-stream in this State at one time or another. It is most interesting."

The Professor let his pencil run idly over the map, and finally made a dot near one corner of it.

"I spent two or three weeks there not long ago," he said, "and I was sorry I didn't have some money to invest. However, it's just as well. I probably should have lost it."

"Somebody try to sell you some land?" asked the Senator.

"Oh, no; but there is land to be had there, and it's sure to be worth a lot of money later, if one can afford to wait. I've been waiting all my life, so it would be easy for me — if I had the money. The thing to do is just to buy the land and forget about it for a few years. That's what a man I met up there told me. He was a most interesting fellow."

"A land-shark, probably."

"Perhaps; but he was very convincing. Even an ignoramus like myself could grasp the situation. You see where the fork of the river comes." The Professor indicated with his pencil. "Well, there isn't anything but a little blacksmith's shop there now, but there's sure to be a city there some day. It's the best site for one anywhere in that vicinity, and proper development of the surrounding country is all that is needed."

"Any railroad?"

"No. That's the trouble. The character of the country makes it rather difficult of access, but they say a road is sure to come. It will go through that territory to reach the district beyond. And the people who make the big profits on such invest-

ments, are the ones who get into the districts before the railroads."

"That sounds like a real estate prospectus," laughed the Senator. "The man you met there must have told you that."

"Perhaps he did," replied the Professor, thoughtfully. "I don't remember."

"Railroads don't always go where you expect them to," continued the Senator, "and somehow cities do not always seek the best sites."

"I suppose you're right," admitted the Professor, "but I took an option on the land. I had reason to expect I should have quite a sum of ready money later, and it looked like a good chance to me."

"If you're after a get-rich-quick scheme," said the Senator, "you ought to be a member of the Legislature right now. There's a hen on."

"On what?" asked the Professor, innocently.

"I mean," laughed the Senator, "that there's a measure to be put through, if possible, on golden wings."

"Oh!" cried the Professor, his eyes brightening with excitement. "Bribery!"

"Yes," said the Senator, "although we don't always call it that."

"Tell me about it," urged the Professor. "I am most interested in that subject. What's the measure? And how do they do it?"

"Bribery is indirect, rather than direct, in these days," explained the Senator. "They often reach a man through his financial, personal, or political interests: there is only an implied bargain and no direct cash transaction. Of course it amounts to the same thing, but it's easier on a man's conscience, and more difficult to detect."

"But this particular case," persisted the Professor. "What is it?"

"I don't know," replied the Senator, his brow clouding. "If I did, I might find some way to block the game. Perhaps you've heard that lobbyists and schemers are just a little afraid of me."

"Oh, I'm so utterly ignorant and out of the world that people seldom take the trouble to tell me anything," explained the Professor, "but I think I have heard the phrase 'aggressively honest' used to describe you."

"Possibly, possibly," returned the gratified Senator. "At any rate, the corruptionists fight shy of me, but I have been here long enough to know the signs of a job. When anything big is on hand, it is in the air, in the atmosphere. You know it with-

out knowing it—that is, you become morally certain that ‘something is doing,’ to use the popular phrase, without knowing just what it is. Activity in certain quarters is in itself a pretty good indication, and you feel the suppressed excitement of those who are in the secret.”

“I hope it comes to light while I am here,” said the Professor. “I should like to have an insight into the devious ways of politics and legislation.”

“You’ll get it when the measure is sprung,” asserted the Senator, aggressively. “I shall tear the scheme wide open the moment I get the facts.”

Before the Professor could ask any further questions, one of the library attendants entered with a note that had been left for him. After a glance at it, the Professor gave evidence of some excitement, and hastily excused himself. He had overlooked an appointment, he said, but his face and actions, when he had left the library, did not indicate that he was pleased at being reminded of the fact.

When he reached his modest boarding-house quarters, the gentle, kindly, easy-going Professor had been transformed into a man of energy and some passion.

"What are you doing here?" he demanded of the man he found awaiting him.

"Why — why," stammered Carroll (for it was Carroll), disconcerted by this unexpected aggressiveness, "we were getting a little uneasy. Your reports weren't very satisfactory, so Wade and I thought —"

"Leave Wade out," interrupted the Professor. "He has too much sense to let you show up here." Which was true. Carroll was simply incapable of understanding a "fine" piece of work, and his anxiety and impatience had led him to make this grievous mistake, in spite of the promise Wade had exacted. He wanted to see for himself what the Professor, whom he had met for the first time when this task was undertaken, was doing. But he was seriously disconcerted by this greeting.

"Well, we're only waiting for your man to put the thing through," he said, defensively, "and some of the boys are getting impatient. I've got people behind me that are anxious, too. So we thought I'd better show up here and see if things can't be hurried a little."

"See if things can't be ruined!" ejaculated the Professor. "If it gets out that you've seen me,

it's all ended. The least little suspicion of me will settle it. And you're pretty well known here."

"I'm down on other business," said Carroll. "I slipped over to this house on the quiet, and nobody saw me. But," recovering some of his self-assertiveness, "we've reached every one necessary, except your man. Why in thunder should it take so long to get him?"

"Well, now, I ought not to be telling you your business," answered the Professor, "but Wade gave me a little insight into the affair. The men you've already got are of minor importance. There isn't one of them who is good for anything except his own vote, and some of them aren't good for even that, if you fail to get Duncan. They're afraid of him. If he turns loose, they'll hunt cover like scared rabbits; if he is with you, it will allay suspicion in other quarters and enable you to get other votes. That's why you've got to have him; that's why I'm here. I didn't like the job, but I'm beginning to get interested in it, and I'll see it through — if you let me alone. Go back to Wade and tell him if he lets you or any one else come near me again, I'll throw the whole thing up."

The Professor was angry. Even Wade would have been surprised to know that the Professor

could show so much spirit; but Wade never had seen him when a fool's action jeopardized the success of an enterprise that had taken him away from his books and into the real life of the world. Still, Wade knew that, in spite of his customary dreaminess, he had the wit and the resourcefulness to accomplish almost anything he undertook. Otherwise it would have been folly to entrust him with this mission. As a matter of fact, it had aroused in him the sensations and interest of a closely contested game that he was particularly anxious to have the satisfaction of winning; it had taken him back a good many years in his life. Besides, he needed the money.

The Professor did not return to the library that day; but the following day he was there as usual, and he again gave some attention to the map.

"I don't believe I am going to lose anything on that option, after all," he told the Senator. "I paid two hundred dollars for it, and the man who sent for me yesterday offered me three hundred dollars to transfer it to him."

"Did you let him have it?" asked the Senator, interestedly.

"No," replied the Professor; "he was too anxious. Even I could see that. And, if there's

money in it for him, why not for me? I have only a little myself, but, if it's really good, I ought to be able to borrow some."

The Senator sat down beside him and examined the map closely, tracing out the railroads and streams with his pencil. Then he got a map of the county that was made on a larger scale.

"What land is covered by your option?" he asked.

The Professor drew a line around it.

"That's a good bit of land," commented the Senator. "What's the price?"

"Ten thousand dollars, and I've got about two thousand dollars of it."

"I didn't know you scientists ever had so much ready cash," remarked the Senator.

"A little legacy," explained the Professor. "I expected it would be considerably more, but it wasn't. I had that in mind when I got the option, but it isn't enough, and I got frightened besides. I don't know much about business, and I'd hate to lose it."

"What's the price of other land in the vicinity?" asked the Senator.

"Really, I don't know," replied the Professor, reddening a little at this confession. "It seemed

to me cheap, and — Well, frankly, I got the option and then forgot about it in my researches here until a letter reminded me of it.”

“You have just about as much business sense as most people in your line,” laughed the Senator, “but perhaps I can be of some assistance to you. I’ll look into the matter, and, if it’s all right, I may go into the deal with you — if you’ll let me in.”

“I wish you would,” said the Professor, sincerely.

The result of the Senator’s investigations rather surprised him. There was no land in that vicinity on the market. It was held by a few individuals that he never had heard of before, in rather large tracts, and they did not seem disposed to sell. He failed to get even a satisfactory quotation.

“I believe there’s some talk of putting a railroad through there,” one real estate man told him. “At any rate, there are some people who seem mighty anxious for that land just now, and no one wants to sell.”

The Senator looked up the last recorded sale, and found that the price quoted by the Professor was reasonable. He did not see how the purchase could fail to prove a fair investment in time, even if there should be nothing in it in the immediate future, and, though the situation was rather con-

fusing, there was a possibility of a big profit at an early day. It would be a kindness to assist the good old Professor in protecting his option money, and there was reason to believe the kindness would be rewarded in the end.

"I'll put up half the money to buy that land for half the profits," he told the Professor.

"Good," was the reply. "Your five thousand dollars and my two thousand dollars will make all but three thousand dollars of the necessary sum, and I guess I can borrow that. I can use my half-interest as security, can't I?"

"When you get it," said the Senator. "You can't very well use a thing for security until you have title to it."

"I suppose not," returned the Professor, thoughtfully, "but I guess I can arrange it."

However, a few days later he came to the Senator with another proposition. He had been unable to secure the loan, for he knew little of business, and had no friends who were able to spare such a sum.

"If I had the ready cash, I'd let you have it myself," said the Senator, "but five thousand dollars is my limit just now. I suppose I might borrow it for you."

"Oh, that wouldn't be fair," asserted the Profes-

sor. "If you furnish the money you ought to get the profit. Why not do that?" as if the idea had just occurred to him. "My own two thousand dollars is a pretty big investment for me."

The Senator demurred, — the scheme was the Professor's, and he ought to have a half-interest in it, if that were a possible thing, — but the Professor convinced him that a fifth interest would be ample and just, under the circumstances; it would be more to him than the four-fifths would be to the Senator.

The matter was finally arranged on this basis. As a matter of fact, the investment looked very enticing to the Senator. It was evident to him that some one was anxious to secure that land. In his investigations he had learned that he could make a few hundred dollars himself by getting the Professor's option for some unknown parties who were dealing through one of the real estate men. So, having made sure that the Professor's option was valid, he borrowed three thousand dollars to complete the needed sum, and the Professor bought the land, the necessary contract to protect the Senator's interests having been executed. The Senator did not appear in the transaction, so far as any third party was concerned. There was no reason why he should not, but it was simpler and easier to let

the Professor complete the bargain. Still, the Senator might have been worried, if he had known that the Professor had that contract photographed.

"There seems to be something good in it," remarked the Professor, when the purchase had been made and the deed to the Senator's part of the land surrendered to him. "I've been offered five hundred dollars for a fifteen thousand dollar option on it for ninety days."

"What's that?" cried the Senator. "Five hundred dollars for a ninety-day option at fifteen thousand dollars. If it were not for the lack of transportation facilities, I'd think some big manufacturing concern wanted to locate there. Was the offer put in writing?"

The Professor produced a letter verifying his statement.

"But why the option?" mused the Senator. "Why not an outright purchase now? I guess we'd better let things stand as they are until we see what's up, and then we can divide under the contract. We can't split up the land fairly until we know more, so I'll just keep the deed without recording it."

When, a little later, five hundred dollars was offered for a ninety-day option at twenty thousand

dollars, the Senator's curiosity and cupidity were both aroused. This would mean one hundred per cent. profit on the investment, and a man who would put up five hundred dollars for an option must necessarily expect to take the property. All in all, it was a most extraordinary affair. He made some inquiries, but the offer came through a real estate man who was not at liberty to reveal the identity of his principals. All he knew was that they would pay almost any price for that property under certain circumstances, and they felt sure enough that the circumstances would be favourable to risk five hundred dollars on an option.

It was only a few days after this that the Senator came to the Professor in great excitement.

"It's out!" he cried. "I know now why options on that land were in such demand. They want to put a railroad through. The bill has just been introduced in the House."

The Professor looked pleased.

"That will mean a lot of money for us, won't it?" he said.

The Senator looked at the Professor sharply, but it was impossible to suspect such a guileless fellow.

"Come with me," he said at last. "I want to talk with you."

"Is it so very important?" asked the Professor, closing his book, regretfully. The Senator assured him that it was, and took him to his committee-room.

"If you were any one else," he explained, "I should think you were on the inside in this business, for you've put me in a mighty mean position."

"I'm sorry," asserted the Professor.

"I believe you," said the Senator, "but it doesn't alter the facts. If this bill goes through it means a lot of money to me on an investment that you know I went into innocently."

"Is there any reason why it shouldn't go through?" asked the Professor.

"It involves land-grants and special privileges that will be worth close to a million dollars to the people back of the scheme," explained the Senator, "and for these the State will get nothing."

"Oh!" said the Professor, dismally; "then you can't vote for it."

"Not as I understand it now," said the Senator. He was pacing back and forth nervously, and he stopped to add: "But it's mighty hard to let a hundred per cent. profit get away."

"Is your vote necessary?" asked the Professor.

Again the Senator looked at the Professor sharply, but the latter seemed as innocent and guileless as before; and the question was only a natural one. The profit depended upon the passage of the bill, whether he voted for it or not. Silence alone might be effective.

When the Senator was sought out by a reporter he had nothing to say. As he had been looked to for a scathing arraignment of the measure, this was surprising.

"It has been very vigorously assailed in some quarters," suggested the reporter.

"I know, I know," replied the Senator, "but I am not sufficiently acquainted with the details of the measure to discuss it now. I may have something to say later."

This being quoted in the papers, gave joy to many people. Senator Duncan, the aggressive opponent of all jobbery, was silent. The newspapers and some legislators said harsh things, but Senator Duncan refused to commit himself one way or another, and this gave courage to the timorous ones and almost convinced those who did not fully understand what the measure meant. Then some of the papers changed their tone: the devel-

opment of that region would be of benefit to the State, and, in view of the conditions, encouragement and assistance might be proper. Perhaps the railroad people were asking too much, but there was no reason why something should not be conceded to them. Thus the issue became clouded. There was room for argument, and, when there is room for argument, an excuse can be found for almost any course by the man who cares to hunt for it. There were many people hunting.

Just about this time the Professor wrote a letter to John Wade.

"My share of the work is about done," he said. "Send on your lobby. I'll stay here and watch things, but it's time for some one who is supposed to have some practical knowledge to show up and do a little talking. He must keep away from me, however."

Wade sent for Carroll.

"We're ready for this man Tuttle that your people think so highly of," he told him. "Send him to me."

Carroll had been careful to say nothing of his own trip to the capital, and Wade did not know how near they had come to failure as a result of it, or

he might have made some caustic comment on his associate's "coarse" methods.

The "lobby" that appeared consisted of one man — Tuttle — and this man worked openly, and spoke with apparent frankness. He professed to see nothing but merit in the bill, and he argued cleverly and legitimately; but his letters explained more than his published interviews or his public arguments. "The outlook is bright," he wrote. "Duncan's 'I have nothing to say' is worth more to us than another man's vote. If he continues silent there will be no trouble in the House, and probably not much in the Senate. His course so far has amply justified our assurances that there was nothing to fear from him, and our stock is high in this town. The boys are satisfied we know what we're talking about, and the doubtful ones are so sure now that the thing is going through anyhow that they are getting anxious for seats in the wagon. You know how it is. So long as they can't stop it, they might as well be on the inside. No use letting honesty go to waste when there is 'something doing' that can't be helped. Well, if the Governor isn't tractable we'll need them all, including Duncan. I'm going to see Duncan in a day or so."

Two prominent business men of the capital city, having no connection with the Legislature, were present at the interview when it took place, and they afterward asserted that there was not one improper word or suggestion in the whole course of it. Tuttle went over his arguments, giving the difficulties to be surmounted as a reason for the unusual demands.

"Though the land-grants we ask are valuable," he said, "the land that is going to be most benefited is beyond our reach. I confess frankly that we tried to get it, but somebody had an option on it."

"What land was that?" asked the Senator, carelessly.

"Right at the fork of the river," replied Tuttle, marking the place on the map he had brought with him. "We planned to locate some shops there, and, of course, that means a town-site. Part of the land we want we've got, or at least we've got an option on it, which makes it the more important that we should get the rest of it. There's only a corner of one big tract, adjoining the land already within our reach, that we need, but I suppose we'll have to buy the whole tract; and, now that our plans are known, the price is pretty sure to be high — thirty thousand dollars or more, very likely, but

we'll have to pay it. However, that doesn't interest you," continued Tuttle. "I mention it only because I want to be perfectly frank with you. All this is a mere incident in the larger plan. We want to get into the district beyond and make connections there that will be of advantage from the freight standpoint, and this is a short, although difficult, route. We can build cheaper in a more roundabout way, and we'll have to do it if the State can't see the importance of encouraging us. Now, here," and he went at the map again, "is our alternative route. By building to Scovil we can connect with the D. & N. and reach our objective point that way, but then we cross the State-line without touching the undeveloped section. It ought to be worth something to the State to have us go through that, especially as, when our line is once built the other way, there will be fewer inducements to any one else to build the more direct route. Do I make myself clear?"

"Quite so," replied the Senator. "It will be of advantage to the State to have the road built, but aren't you asking too high a price from the State?"

"We don't think so," replied Tuttle, promptly; "do you?"

"I shall have to think the matter over," said the Senator, evasively.

So the two business men reported that the interview was perfectly frank and proper in every detail, and the Senator devoted himself to "thinking the matter over." Thirty thousand dollars for that land would mean a profit of \$16,000 for him and \$4,000 for the Professor. The land was not in his name, and there would be no record of the transaction, so far as he was concerned. At that moment he had \$8,000 tied up in the land, for \$3,000 of which he had given his individual note. If the road should be built by the "alternative route" there was every likelihood that his money would remain tied up there, for this action would make it much less likely that any other road would try the direct route, and land values would be depressed in consequence. On the one hand there was a big profit; on the other, a financial sacrifice or a sum of money that he could ill spare for any length of time tied up indefinitely, and a note for \$3,000 to meet.

"How the devil did the Professor ever run on to that land?" he asked himself, irritably; and then he told a reporter who sought to interview him that

anything he had to say on the subject would be said when the bill reached the Senate, and not before.

"Will you oppose it?" persisted the reporter.

"Perhaps," replied the Senator; "but it's not all bad. There is room for an honest difference of opinion."

Tuttle and the Professor chuckled when they read that statement, and there was joy in certain legislative circles. Senator Duncan's own words justified them in any position they might see fit to take, and no later attack on the measure could have much force. In vain the unswervingly honest minority fought: the bill went through the House by a good majority, and in the Senate Duncan was still silent. Others opposed it, but Duncan had nothing to say.

Meanwhile, the Professor pursued the even tenor of his way, not entirely forgetful of his financial interests, but much more absorbed in his researches. He met the Senator as before, and he occasionally asked some question about the situation, but they were innocent, and often absurd, questions, and in no sense arguments for or against the measure. Indeed, his course was that of the honourable man who would sacrifice his own interests rather than attempt to sway his friend — until he was informed that there was danger of failure.

"We shall need Duncan's vote," was the message brought to him. "We must have it for the moral effect on the Governor and to give some of the weakening Senators backbone. We might skim through without Duncan, but the influence of his vote will give us the majority we need to hold a wavering Governor."

After that the Professor, for the first time, brought up the subject in a direct and straightforward way.

"I'm going to give an option on my interest in that land," he said. "Then perhaps these people will let me alone. You see, they think I own it all, and they're driving me frantic."

"And if I should tear up the contract and the unrecorded deed," remarked the Senator, thoughtfully, "you would own it all."

"Why, of course," exclaimed the Professor, as if the thought had just occurred to him. "You wouldn't have to execute any papers or sign anything, would you? That's the simplest way of transferring land that I ever heard of. There wouldn't even be a record of it."

"No," said the Senator, slowly; "but you can't give an option on your interest without betraying the situation." Thus the Senator found himself

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deliberately dallying with evil and frankly considering methods of subterfuge. "If you're bound to do it," he added, "you'd better give an option on the whole tract; and if the sale is made I can make your title good by destroying the papers I hold."

"For twenty-four thousand dollars," said the Professor. "That would be your share of the thirty thousand dollars option price. Why, as I understand it, it would be my deal entirely, and I should be paying out this sum just to remove any cloud on the title. Isn't that the way of it? I'm not much of a business man, but that seems to me right."

"It's a good way to put it," admitted the Senator; "a surprisingly good way for an unbusinesslike man."

"I'll show you," said the Professor, with the joyousness of a child who has been complimented, "that I can be very practical when I try." And he proved this the next day by producing a contract, executed by a real estate man, to take the land at \$30,000 the moment the building of the projected road was assured. "I forced him to come right down to facts," he explained, jubilantly. "I offered to give him the option if he would state plainly on

what conditions he would pay the price named, and he did it."

The Senator did not sleep well that night. He was not at all pleased with himself, and no sophistical arguments could quite satisfy his conscience. He had gone into this speculation innocently, and a man would be a fool not to protect his own investments, but — that troublesome "but" ended all his attempts at justification. He was in a distressing predicament. There was \$24,000 within reach, or there was \$8,000 tied up and part of it possibly lost. If any man had attempted to bribe him he would have knocked him down; but it merely happened that he had interests that would be affected. It did seem strange that he happened to have these interests just at this time, but — Well, there was no use bothering about that. Even if the Professor were not all that he had honestly believed him to be, it would not change the situation. He would have suspected any other man, but the Professor never had tried to influence him by argument of any sort — indeed, he had had less to say on the subject of the railroad bill than almost any other man of his acquaintance. True, the last contract was rather surprising, but the Professor's explanation of it was plausible. Anyhow, he would do all that could be expected of him

if he refrained from voting. That was a course honourable men frequently pursued when personal interests were likely to influence their judgment, but —

Senator Duncan was still worrying over the "buts" when, by invitation, he went to see the Governor the next day. He was trying not to frame in words the fact that honourable men acted openly in such matters, even when they did not vote. They explained the situation, and he could not explain without killing the measure. The thing would not look right. He might better vote against it than try to explain why he kept silent.

"I would like to have your views on this railroad bill," said the Governor. "I confess that I am in doubt about it."

The Governor was a weak man, and no one knew it better than the Senator. If he had had more courage and force he might have been a dangerous man, but he dared not do all that he would like to do. So he had become known as weak rather than bad, but he was not a man to look for flaws in a measure that was politically or financially expedient, so long as he was properly upheld.

"I do not feel like passing judgment upon it," said the Senator. "I have given it some thought,

but there are many things to be considered. The railroad is needed."

"Will it have your vote?" asked the Governor.

"I do not know," answered the Senator, after a moment of hesitation. "The road ought to be built. If it is not worth the price asked it seems strange that no one else has offered to build it for less."

"That's just the way I feel about it," said the Governor, evidently relieved; "but it is viciously assailed."

"Unjustly so," asserted the Senator, led to say more than he wished. "Some men are so constituted that they cannot see both sides of a question. There is no occasion for the fierce attacks made upon it as something utterly bad."

"I am glad to hear you say so," said the Governor. "The multiplicity of my duties does not leave me time for a close study of all measures, and I have to be guided to some extent by those in whom I have confidence. Your silence has led me to think you do not find it entirely bad, and if it had your open support I should feel perfectly easy about it."

The Senator knew that the Governor was trying to justify himself to his conscience, and, incidentally,

to acquire the courage to do what he wanted to do. If the bill went through by a good majority the Governor would not hesitate; if it barely got through the Governor might be frightened into vetoing it. The Senator had thought of having important business at home when the bill came up for final reading and passage, but he dared not leave now. Perhaps the bill would have a sufficient majority without him. In that case no harm would be done if he voted "no," and thus kept his record clear, for the Governor would sign it if he dared. But would his record be clear? His silence, so unusual in such a case, had been a tacit endorsement of the measure, and had been commented upon as such. Still, the recorded "no" should outweigh that.

Senator Duncan despised himself as he waited for the roll-call. He had become fretful and irritable as a result of the questions of his colleagues; he had told them he did not know how he should vote, and he spoke truthfully. He also told them that he had kept out of the debate because he had been unable to formulate an opinion that justified him in taking a decided stand. Then he stopped answering questions altogether.

"I'll do what my conscience dictates when the time comes," he said, and he knew that he was

dishonest at heart, no matter how he voted in the end. He had been corrupted when he had been lured to silence and later to a verbal justification of those who favoured the measure. Whether innocently or by design, he had been corrupted, and just before he took his seat he had telephoned to the library to know if the Professor was there. It made little difference, but it would be some satisfaction to know definitely that he had not been outwitted and used as a puppet. If the Professor was engaged in his customary researches at this critical moment it would be pretty good evidence that he had acted innocently in the matter, and that would be some solace to the worldly-wise Senator. He was informed that the Professor was there, writing, and he felt a little better. No one had tried deliberately to make a fool or a tool of him: he was the victim of circumstances. How could he know that the Professor was too good a judge of human nature to appear in the Senate gallery when he most wished to be there?

Two men who preceded Senator Duncan on the roll-call disappointed him. He had expected them to vote for the bill, but one was absent and the other voted "no." This apparent defection might be made up farther down the list, but there was no certainty

of it, and the Senator would not dare to change his vote. That would be worse than voting "aye" in the first place. Nor could he keep silent now and refuse to vote. At least a fair majority was imperative, and there were some that his vote would influence. Even the Governor had said —

"Duncan!" called the clerk.

It was his property, innocently purchased; why should he sacrifice it? He had come honestly into possession of a deed and a contract involving \$24,000; why should he make them worthless? On the decision of the moment rested this sum.

"Aye," said Senator Duncan.

Carroll was jubilant when he heard the news; Carroll was to be well paid for his services. In fact, Carroll already had some stock put away, and the action of the Legislature made this stock valuable.

Wade said nothing until Denton reported.

"So far as I can judge from surface indications," said Wade, "you did a good job for the railroad, but how about me?"

Denton handed him a photograph of the Duncan contract.

"I tried to get a receipt for the money, too," he

explained, "but he wouldn't give that, and it seemed unwise to press the matter."

"This is quite enough," returned Wade. "It may be worth a United States Senatorship to me."

VII.

AZRO CRAIG'S AWAKENING

THERE is no day of rest or freedom from anxiety for the ambitious politician. Whatever may be the victories that lie behind, there is always something ahead that may mean defeat. He must fight and plan steadily and persistently to gain what he wishes or retain what he has: inactivity means retrogression.

John Wade was nearing the critical point in his political career long before he had made a United States Senatorship the goal of his ambition. Some men, in the innermost recesses of their souls, decide that they will strive for the Presidency, and never get beyond minor municipal or State offices; they discover that the Presidency is not for men of their class and that they never had any real expectation of reaching it. Wade was more practical. He expected to get what he went after, but he was wise enough to go after nothing that was absolutely

beyond his reach. The Presidency, he decided, was not for a "machine" manager, for the public had Presidential ideals, and did not regard "machine" management with particular favour. But a Senatorship was easily possible, so he did not look beyond it.

On the eve of the battle, like a good general, he made a careful mental review of his forces, his defences, his position, and the position of the enemy. He was reasonably strong, but not strong enough to be at all sure of victory. It looked to him like this:

He could not count on Ben Carroll, and Carroll might be needed. He had stolen from Carroll much of Carroll's power, and Carroll was not a man to part with power joyously: he needed it for financial purposes. He was vindictive, but he never lost sight of his own interests. Consequently, he might still be controlled. He was still a "machine" lever, and, if this lever failed to "work" at a critical moment, it might throw the whole thing out of gear. Therefore, it was necessary that Carroll should be controlled.

Aside from this, things were very favourable. Wade had succeeded in organizing the previous Legislature by putting Henry Wellington in as Speaker of the House, and, through Wellington, he had been able to confer many favours and make

many friends. Incidentally, he had been able also to discover who would be tractable and who would not, and some of the intractable ones had been retired at the election that followed. But there was a distressing element of uncertainty in one quarter. He had enabled Dan Nally, alias Dick Haggin, to escape the meshes of the law, but there seemed to be a lack of gratitude for this. Nally had strong political friends, of whom State Senator Abbey was one, and many of these friends seemed to understand that Wade had not acted willingly in the matter, that he had been forced to bestir himself as a matter of political expediency. He had done what no other could do, but others, notably Carroll, had exerted themselves more cheerfully. He had forced a pledge from Senator Abbey, but it looked very much as if Carroll had the greater influence with some new members from that vicinity. Still, Wade was personally stronger than he had been in the preceding Legislature. He felt that he could count absolutely on Azro Craig, and Craig had developed into a man of wide influence with the country members. True, Craig had proved recalcitrant in one or two matters, but that was because he believed them outside his province as a legislator, and his antipathy to Carroll was deep-rooted. He would surely be for Wade in

so personal a fight. Then there was David Clow, who was confidently counted upon by the opposition, but Wade only laughed when he thought of him. Clow was a man who had given a mortgage on himself that only needed to be foreclosed. Senator Weston, who wished to succeed himself, might think he had Clow, but he would learn his mistake later. The situation was much the same in the case of Senator Horace Duncan. The Senator had no hesitation in saying that he would vote for Weston, but Wade had reason to believe that he would change his mind at the moment when that change would be most effective. The fact that the Senator had no suspicion of this was of no importance whatever: Wade frequently knew what a man would do better than the man himself.

Having reviewed the situation mentally, Wade wisely went to work to discover whether he had made any mistakes in his figures. He had various lieutenants that he used, but some things he deemed it best to look after personally. He would make doubly sure of Craig first.

"I ain't promisin'," said Craig, sullenly.

"I thought you were my friend, Azro," urged Wade.

"I was," replied Craig, "but you got too many

friends. Anybody's your friend that'll do what you want."

"Haven't I been a friend to you?"

"Ye-es," admitted Craig, "but you been a friend to Carroll, too, an' you can't be a real friend to both of us. I've learned a thing or two since I been to Springfield, Jack. I was ag'in the 'machine' first, an' I thought you was ag'in it, but you ain't. You're part of it — the very best part of it, I guess, but part of it jest the same. Mebbe we got to have a 'machine' o' some sort, like folks say, an' I reckon I got to vote for it one way or another, but I'm ag'in Carroll. He's the worst there is in 'machine' politics. They say he's goin' to be with Senator Weston for reelection, an' —"

"Who says so?" interrupted Wade.

"Lots o' folks," replied Craig. "I'm wiser than I was, Jack, an' I been nosin' 'round a little to see how things is goin' to be at the next session, jest like you. Weston has got some things organized better'n you think. He's reachin' for your 'machine.' If he gets the Carroll end of it, I'm with *you*, but I ain't makin' no other promises."

"Do you remember when you came to Chicago two years ago?" asked Wade.

"Ye-es."

"Did you find a better friend than I was? Did any one treat you any better?"

"No-o; but I'm beginnin' to think it was politics, Jack. I been tryin' to keep on believin' in you — tryin' hard — but it ain't jest easy. I don't know as I can 'do it any more, if you harness up with Carroll ag'in."

"Carroll and I are out," said Wade.

"'Betsy an' I are out,'" quoted Craig, "but 'Betsy an' I' made up ag'in. I'm watchin' an' thinkin', an' I'm learnin' the ways of politics."

The shock of this enigmatical and unsatisfactory reply made Wade nervous about other people. He had not doubted his ability to get an absolute pledge from Craig, and he found him almost combative. If he gained Carroll, he would lose Craig in all probability. He might keep a Carroll alliance in the background, as Carroll was not personally a member of the Legislature, but Craig had gained in wisdom and suspicion.

"These simple fellows from the back districts are the most uncertain propositions on earth," he mused. "You have some basis of judgment with ordinary men, but you never can tell what one of these fellows will do."

And the session of the Legislature that would

elect a United States Senator would begin shortly. Clearly, it was time to investigate every detail of his position personally, so far as that was possible. One of his lieutenants had brought him cheering news from Senator Abbey, but he decided to see the Senator himself.

"Senator," he said, "you haven't forgotten the programme, have you?"

"No," replied the State Senator, "but you're going to have trouble, Wade."

"In what way?"

"Well, I can see the signs of a nasty fight blowing up," explained Abbey. "You're not very strong in some ways, Wade, and public sentiment is going to be against you."

"Public sentiment doesn't elect men to the United States Senate," remarked Wade, sententiously.

"No, but public sentiment sometimes defeats men who want to go there," returned Abbey. "It's stronger negatively than it is affirmatively, and you're going to have a hard time getting the party to unite on you. If you can't show up with more than a caucus majority at the start, you haven't a chance; if you can, I think you can win. Most of Weston's strength is pledged to him conditionally. He's got to make a certain showing to win."

"How about you?"

"I'm with you, of course. I told you that when you pulled Dan Nally out of the fire and saved my district for me. But you didn't do it gracefully, Wade, and some of the people over there haven't forgotten it. They're beginning to think you're not one of the good people. They won't stick to you very long, if Carroll goes to Weston. They like Carroll. Are you sure of Carroll?"

"I'll be sure of him."

"That's good. You'll need him. There are two new men from that district, and some more near enough to be affected by conditions there. With Carroll back of you, you can count on six votes in a bunch; without Carroll, you can have four of the six on the first ballot, but I can't hold more than two after that. I've pulled a few wires for you elsewhere, however, that will give you three more votes in addition to my own, so you can credit me with a total of eight on joint ballot or in caucus. That's not so bad."

"But I want to hold them," argued Wade. "This thing isn't going to be settled in a minute."

"Can't be held without Carroll," replied Abbey; "that is, all of them can't, unless you make a mighty big showing right from the jump. I tell you, some

of those people think pretty well of Weston. If he shows up strong, you and Carroll together will have all you can do to hold them. And there's another thing, Wade."

"What?"

"You'd better see if you can't check the popular endorsement of Weston. That's going to hurt. As I said before, public sentiment can defeat a man easier than it can elect him. You haven't got a firm enough grip on your votes to hold them, if the thing gets too strong. Can't you do something with Trumbull?"

"I'll try," said Wade.

John N. Trumbull was chairman of the Political Action Committee of the Central Club. He was also the husband of Mrs. Helen R. Trumbull, one of the trustees of the State University, and Wade had been outwardly very "clever" to Mrs. Trumbull, although not always the true friend that he seemed. In fact, he had assisted Carroll in an unsuccessful effort to make her "tractable" in relation to certain university affairs, but he had considerably allowed Carroll to get all the blame for it. That was Wade's way. Trumbull had taken no active part in the campaign, but he was influential, and Wade had once before considered the advisability of going to

him. Weston had made a fairly satisfactory Senator, and the Central Club, being a Republican organization, thought it only fair to endorse him for another term. Still, it was far from wildly enthusiastic, and Wade had not feared that a perfunctory endorsement would do any great harm. It was the Legislature, and not the Central Club, that was going to elect a United States Senator. But very recently things had taken a new turn. A strong undercurrent of opposition to the "machine" politician had developed, and it would take little to bring it to the surface and change it into a wave of popular disapproval. A perfunctory resolution by the Central Club might do it. Wherefore, Wade decided to act upon Senator Abbey's suggestion.

Trumbull greeted Wade cordially, for he felt that Mrs. Trumbull was indebted to him for many courtesies and much assistance in the discharge of her semi-public duties. It is the unconscious influence of woman that counts most. If Mrs. Trumbull had made an effort to direct her husband's political course, or had endeavoured to show him by argument that he should be particularly friendly to Wade, she would have failed. As it was, she had merely told how obliging he had been and had commented frequently on the fact that he was the most

gentlemanly of all the politicians she had met. So, as Trumbull's personal intercourse with Wade had been equally satisfactory, he felt very favourably disposed to the man who had done so much for his wife.

"I understand, Mr. Trumbull," said Wade, after a few desultory remarks, "that your Committee on Political Action will endorse Senator Weston."

"I think it quite likely," admitted Trumbull, "although I shall not advocate any such action."

"Couldn't you oppose it?" asked Wade.

"Hardly," replied Trumbull. "You surely do not expect the committee to endorse you?"

"No," said Wade, "but I don't see why it should endorse anybody. Your club, although Republican, is not primarily a political club, and it does not ordinarily mix up in Senatorship contests. It is for the party, and not for the faction. Why should the rule be changed this time?"

"It seems to be the sentiment of the club," answered Trumbull, evasively.

"But is it fair?" insisted Wade, speaking with great earnestness. "It is an attempt to use your club in factional politics, Mr. Trumbull; it is part of a political scheme. If you formally endorse Weston, that endorsement will be placed on the desk of

every member of the Legislature on the opening day, and it will be sent to every country paper. It will give the impression that the city is for Weston and against me almost solidly, and that is a false impression. You know it, Mr. Trumbull; you know that it is cleverly arranged so that no one can vote against this endorsement without seeming to disparage or condemn Weston's Washington record, which is fairly good."

"What do you want me to do?" asked Trumbull; for, put in this light, the thing really did look unfair.

"I want you to prevent any endorsement of any kind," said Wade. "You can do it; you have the personal and official influence to do it. As chairman of the committee, you have only to point out that it is unusual and is establishing a precedent that is likely to make future trouble. Protest vigorously against the introduction of factional politics into a club of merchants and professional men that never before has done more than simply to be for the party solidly when big issues were at stake. There are only a few who want to do this thing; the rest of them don't even see the point that is being made. They think they are only endorsing a past record."

Trumbull drummed thoughtfully on his desk with

a pencil. He knew that there was much of truth in what Wade said, that it was largely a political scheme by a few men for Weston's benefit; but he also knew that it was Wade's objectionable "machine" record that made this possible. Then he thought of Mrs. Trumbull and the various things she had said. So far as he could give it to him, Wade was surely entitled to a fair show.

"I'll do it," he said, at last. "It will be time enough to endorse Weston's previous record when his term ends."

Trumbull did not see all that Wade saw in this action, for Trumbull did not know all that Wade knew. Among the knowing ones it already had been whispered that the Central Club would endorse Weston. When it failed to do so, the Weston campaign would receive a serious jar that would be almost equal to an endorsement of Wade. It would be a setback.

"Now, if I can hit them somewhere else," he told himself, "I'll have things coming my way."

He thought of David Clow, the man who had unwittingly mortgaged himself. Clow was a Weston man, and Wade had let him think he could be one. But when the time comes to strike, there is nothing like having several blows come at once.

The moral effect of the defection of Clow would be the greater if it closely followed the Central Club disappointment. And Wade was leaving nothing to others now that he could possibly attend to himself; the stake was too large.

"Clow," he said, when he reached that legislator's home in a distant part of the State, "they tell me you are for Weston."

"Yes, I am," replied Clow.

"You ought to be for me, Clow."

"I don't think so," said Clow. "The people who sent me to the Legislature don't think you're the man to be Senator."

Wade winced at this, but he did not change his rather patronizing tone. Wade, with a man in his power, was a very different man from the Wade who was seeking to gain his ends by clever argument.

"Do you remember the last session?" asked Wade.

"Yes," answered Clow.

"Do you remember the bill before the Committee on Commerce — the bill to regulate the express company business?"

"I voted honestly on that bill," declared Clow, excitedly.

"But you speculated on advance information of what the committee would do."

"So did you!" cried Clow.

"You don't know whether I did or not," returned Wade, coldly, "but I know you did."

"It was honest," insisted Clow. "You know it was honest. And you put up the job, John Wade! You knew I was hard up! You were back of the people that were pressing me! And then you showed me the way out by using the stock market, and you said you'd put my deal in with yours. You and Carroll worked that together."

"That's a lie, Clow!"

Clow looked ready to spring at his accuser, but he stopped to think, and thought brought worry. He *had* speculated on committee information, but he had *not* allowed it to influence his vote.

"Carroll has his ways and I have mine," Wade added. "Carroll tried to force you to vote for the boodle end of that bill, while I only tried to make you my friend. What I did for you was done on your written order. Do you remember it?"

"Yes," said Clow, and all the strength and life seemed to go out of him now.

"I want you to be my friend, Clow," said Wade, meaningly.

"It will kill me in this district," pleaded Clow.

"The papers I hold," said Wade, menacingly, "will make you infamous in every district; they'll drive you from the State. Previous to a report by your committee you speculated in stocks that would be affected by that report. No matter how honest your vote may have been, that fact will kill you. You're respected here now, you've been sent to the Legislature a second time, you can go again after this term — if they don't find you out."

"Never, if I vote for you," said Clow.

"But you can live here; you won't be an out-cast, a byword, a shunned man, a convicted grafter. Oh! you needn't protest that you didn't graft! It's not what I know; it's what your friends and neighbours and the people of the State will think they know when they see these papers."

"Where are they?" asked Clow, a sudden wild gleam in his eye.

"Oh, I didn't bring them with me," laughed Wade. "I don't think you could take them from me, but I'm not risking it." Then insinuatingly, "I want you to be my friend, Clow. I'd give up any old papers to a friend — when he has proved his friendship."

"All right," said Clow, almost inaudibly.

"I want you to send word to Chicago that you have broken away from Weston. I'll know when it gets there, and I'll know if it doesn't get there. You needn't say anything about it here, but I want you to come out for me strong when you get to Springfield. It won't hurt you very much. Weston is strong with the people here, but I'll make so good a Senator that it will all be forgiven by the time you are ready to run again."

"I'll do it," said Clow. Wade noticed the big drops of perspiration on his forehead and was weak enough to regret that he had to do what he had done. With the exception of the preliminaries, the job had been more in Carroll's line.

"If it will make you feel any better," Wade said, in parting, "I'll tell you that I know your vote was honest and that Carroll failed to get you to take the boodle view, but the fact that you speculated on your own committee action looks bad, very bad. You're wise to arrange to get those papers back. I'll deliver them to you at Springfield."

Wade returned to Chicago with a reasonably light heart, for he eased his conscience by telling himself that he would surely take care of Clow in some way, in case the latter's constituents should prove unforgiving.

Then he gave his attention to Duncan, and this was an entirely different proposition. Duncan was more worldly wise than Clow. He had had more experience, and he was aggressively strong where Clow was only negatively strong. The idea of an interview did not impress Wade favourably, for one never could tell what Duncan might do. But he needed Duncan — not so much for his one vote as for the moral effect of that vote.

After considerable thought, Wade adopted an unusual and ingenious method of getting Duncan's attention: he mailed him a copy of the photograph of the contract with the Professor.

"He's wise enough to know that it means something," Wade reasoned, "and that he'll find out what it is later, if he keeps silent. If he holds his tongue I'll get him; if he yells — well, I'd rather have him yell before I get mixed up in the affair."

Duncan did not yell. He reasoned, as Wade had expected, that something lay behind this action, and he decided to wait until he learned what it was. He could do nothing else, so far as he could see. His vote on the railroad measure had hurt him, and there could be no possible satisfactory explanation of this contract. It seemed to his friends as if Senator Duncan aged ten years in a single night.

Wade waited three days for him to speak, and then he sent a man to him with this verbal message:

"Mr. Wade says that the negative and all copies of the photograph may be had after the vote on the Senatorship."

The messenger did not know to what this referred, but the Senator did: he knew how he would have to vote to gain this; he knew that refusal spelled ruin for him. Furthermore, if he purposed voting for Wade, it was necessary to prepare the way, for a sensational shift at the last moment would hardly do.

Shortly thereafter the rumour gained currency that Senator Duncan would support Wade; and there were lines in Senator Duncan's face that had not been there before.

Carroll was the next on Wade's list. Carroll was still disgruntled, but he was always able to see where his personal advantage lay, and Wade was in a position to talk convincingly now. He went over the ground very thoroughly, checking off men on a list of the Republican members of the Legislature, and Carroll had to admit that he made a very fair statement of the case. Carroll's own investigations corroborated the reports that Wade had received

from his lieutenants and now presented for consideration.

"You've got a pretty long list of uncertainties there," commented Carroll. "It will take very little to make most of those people jump either way. The Central Club action may do it."

"No," said Wade, with calm confidence. "The Central Club's failure to act will do it. The club's Committee on Political Action met this morning."

"Well?" said Carroll, inquiringly.

"It refused to endorse any one, which means that it tacitly endorsed me. A Weston endorsement was expected, the Weston people said it was coming; it hasn't come. That's a black eye for Weston, isn't it?"

"How the devil did that happen?" demanded Carroll.

"Why, it was all framed up. Your Uncle John hasn't been asleep, Carroll," returned Wade. "It makes no difference how it happened, so long as Weston got the jolt. If you don't believe me, you'll find it in the afternoon papers." And Wade produced one.

The headlines were enough for Carroll, but he made a pretence of reading the article to give him a moment for thought.

"That's going to hurt," he admitted, at last. "It wouldn't be so bad if the Weston people hadn't made such a point of it during the last few days."

"It's not the only mistake the Weston people have made," said Wade, with slow impressiveness. "They have been counting on Clow as one of their right-hand men in his part of the State. Clow will be throwing his hat in the air and yelling for me at Springfield."

"Why, he's been one of the strongest Weston men!" cried Carroll.

"He's seen the error of his ways," returned Wade.

"How did you do it?" asked Carroll, with eager curiosity.

"Never mind that," replied Wade. "I sometimes get my good cards a long time before I play them."

"It was that express deal!" exclaimed Carroll. "I never could quite understand the finish of that."

"Let's not bother with ancient history," said Wade. "Duncan will be with me, too. If the Weston people haven't got their second jolt by tomorrow night, we'll call it all off. If they have, you'd better get into the band-wagon. I want you with me, Carroll."

Carroll did not reply for several minutes. He was wise enough to see the strength of his position, and it was not often that he was able to dictate terms to Wade.

"How about Craig?" he asked, at last.

"If I have you," answered Wade, "Craig will have to follow the party; I'll be strong enough for that. If I don't have you, I'll have Craig, and you'll have to follow the party. It looks as if I could win either way."

"No, you can't," retorted Carroll, apparently reaching a decision. "Without either me or Craig you and Weston stood about even. The Central Club and Clow affairs will give you a lead, and Craig will add something to that lead; but, if I throw my strength to Weston, he'll be on even terms with you again, and it's anybody's fight. Craig is a mighty poor offset for me, Wade; he isn't enthusiastic enough to bring many votes with him in this matter. I can give you strength enough to practically put Weston out of the running, for he can't hold a lot of his people in an up-hill fight. If they start in your direction, as they will, you can poll the full party strength on joint ballot before he knows what has happened. Craig will have to tail on. You need me, Wade, and you'll have to pay for me."

"What's the price?" asked Wade, realizing that Carroll had figured the thing out more carefully than was his custom.

Carroll leaned back in his chair and puffed the smoke of his cigar in Wade's direction. He was absolute master of the situation for almost the first time — master because Wade's ambition had led him to make of himself one of the political puppets with which he was accustomed to play.

"To save myself on Treasurer Hackley's bond," said Carroll, in order to refresh Wade's memory, "when Mrs. Trumbull whipsawed us in the matter of forcing an accounting, I had to redeem the State University securities that he had hypothecated. He never has paid the notes he gave me at that time, and a suit on them would bring out disagreeable inside facts. He may pay them in time, if he succeeds in getting on a more solid financial basis, but I don't think I ought to run all the risk. There are two notes, Wade. I'd like to sell you one of them at its face value, with interest to date."

"I can't afford it, Carroll," pleaded Wade.

"Then you can't afford to be Senator," retorted Carroll, decisively.

"Any kind of a political deal —"

"Those are the terms," interrupted Carroll.

"You're unreasonable, Carroll," insisted Wade. "It was your own affair, not mine."

"It was politics," said Carroll, "and, if you want another political partnership, you've got to pay half the losses of the old firm. I tell you, Wade, I'm making you a bargain price, for you're buying a bit of commercial paper and getting a Senatorship as bonus. The paper may or may not be good, but the Senatorship is."

The two men smoked in silence, each mentally re-viewing the situation to see if there was any point of weakness or strength that had been overlooked. Finally Wade announced abruptly: "It's a hold-up, Carroll, but you've got the drop on me. I'll buy the note."

It was a considerable price to pay, but it is worth something to achieve one's ambition, and it seemed to give Wade a certainty. He would surely draw largely from Weston when the latter's weakness became generally known, and there was good reason to believe that he could make a sufficient showing in caucus to bring every Republican member to him on the first joint ballot. Even Craig would not dare hold back then, although caucus rule was not imposed by party custom.

But Craig had finally awakened, and Craig awake

was a very different man from Craig sleeping. Most of the members and interested politicians reached Springfield a day or so before the opening of the session, to look the ground over and familiarize themselves with the situation. The Weston people were greatly worried. The Central Club's action, or rather refusal to act, had been a hard blow to them, and the defection of Clow was almost as serious. The loss of a man once won is infinitely worse than a failure to win him in the first place. The Wade cohorts were as jubilant as the Weston men were depressed, and Craig circulated impartially among both. He was considered a Wade man by most of the members, but he had little to say. Wade himself was thinking of looking him up, to see if he could reconcile him to the Carroll alliance, when Craig sent for him. That was unusual and disquieting. Craig, the modest, never before had "sent" for any one, but it was no time to stand on ceremony, so Wade went.

"I been thinkin' things over," said Craig, slowly, "an' I come to the conclusion that I was jest about the innocentest guy that ever was the day I sat on your steps in my stockin' feet an' was so tickled by the way you took it. I thought you was glad to see Azro Craig, jest plain Azro Craig, but I learned a

lot since then. You're clever, Jack, but you don't give a blame for anything but votes, present an' to come, an' you're mean — downright low an' mean."

"Hold on, Azro!" cried Wade. "I won't stand —"

"I ain't goin' to hold on!" broke in Craig. "I'm goin' to talk a lot, an' then it's your turn. You think you got things fixed, with all your tricks an' treachery, but you ain't knee-high to a grass-hopper in this fight. You're goin' to draw out."

"Are you crazy?" demanded Wade.

"Not so's a court'll take notice of it," replied Craig, "but I think you was when you got to fightin' a woman in a sneakin' way, not even bein' honest about it. Now, don't git mad, Jack. You got lots o' time to git mad later, an' I'm talkin' of things I know. When you was tryin' to beat Mrs. Trumbull on that State University business, didn't you come to me, like a sneak, to try an' make me fix one o' the trustees, that was my friend, to start the fight ag'in her?"

"I ought to thrash you!" exclaimed Wade.

"Don't you never try it, Jack," retorted Craig. "I'm harder'n a keg o' nails."

"You seem determined to take a perverted view of everything," asserted Wade, assuming the toler-

ant air of one who could afford to be magnanimous with a misguided countryman. "She was making a nuisance of herself."

"She's a woman," returned Craig. "Folks don't like men that don't play fair with women, an' she'd feel mighty put-out about it herself. So would her husband. An' that ain't all, Jack Wade. I tried to excuse that, 'cause I liked you, but Senator Abbey's been tellin' me things. Not knowin' me very well, an' thinkin' I was one o' your certain-sure men, he spoke up kind o' free when I asked him why he was workin' so hard. 'Oh,' says he, 'he saved a handy man o' mine, Dick Haggin, from the penitentiary.' That's all, Jack. He didn't say no more'n that, but I was readin' how one o' the judges sent that feller to the House o' Correction when he was booked for the penitentiary. The papers criticized the judge pretty strong at the time, you know. I ain't forgot."

"It's a lie!" declared Wade. "He didn't know what he was talking about."

"Mebbe so," said Craig, "but I reckon the Weston folks would git the rights of it, if they had the chance. I could make a Bible oath to what Abbey told me, an' the facts don't look real nice. Abbey come out for you strong, you see; then you been so close to the judge in other ways that folks has

talked about it, an' the feller got off. He was pardoned from the House o' Correction, they say. Folks has a way o' gettin' mad at men that monkey with the courts. Mebbe I could tell jest enough to show the connection between the handy man an' the judge. You better draw out o' this fight, Jack."

Wade forced a laugh. It had to be forced, for he knew his position was perilous. And so was the position of his friend, the judge.

"I'm too old at the game to be frightened out," he said, "and you're new at it, Azro."

"Oh, all right," returned Craig. "Folks has been wonderin' how an honest man like Duncan was got on the boodle side o' the railroad bill, an' then they was surprised to see him come out for you, after fightin' you hard before. An' he ain't doin' it a bit cheerful, either. It don't look right, Jack. I don't know what hold you got on him, but I don't reckon you dare spring anything if he breaks away. 'Most everybody would know what it meant, an' mebbe, with all these other things, I could make it clear to them that didn't. When folks begin to git suspicious, they git blame suspicious, an' they know things without havin' 'em pounded in. It would explain a whole lot if you showed up any scandal hurtin' Duncan. Folks would see behind it."

"Duncan is for me, because I have convinced him that I'm the best man," asserted Wade. "The trouble with you, Azro, is that the excitement of politics has set the wheels in your head to running loose and uncontrolled. You've got ghosts in your attic, and you don't know they're ghosts."

Wade was both angry and disturbed. This old fellow had developed a shrewdness that *might* make trouble; clearly the thing to do was to discourage him by making him think he had nothing worth while. But Craig had been debating this matter too long: he had gone over the whole situation in his slow, methodical way, and had reached a definite conclusion.

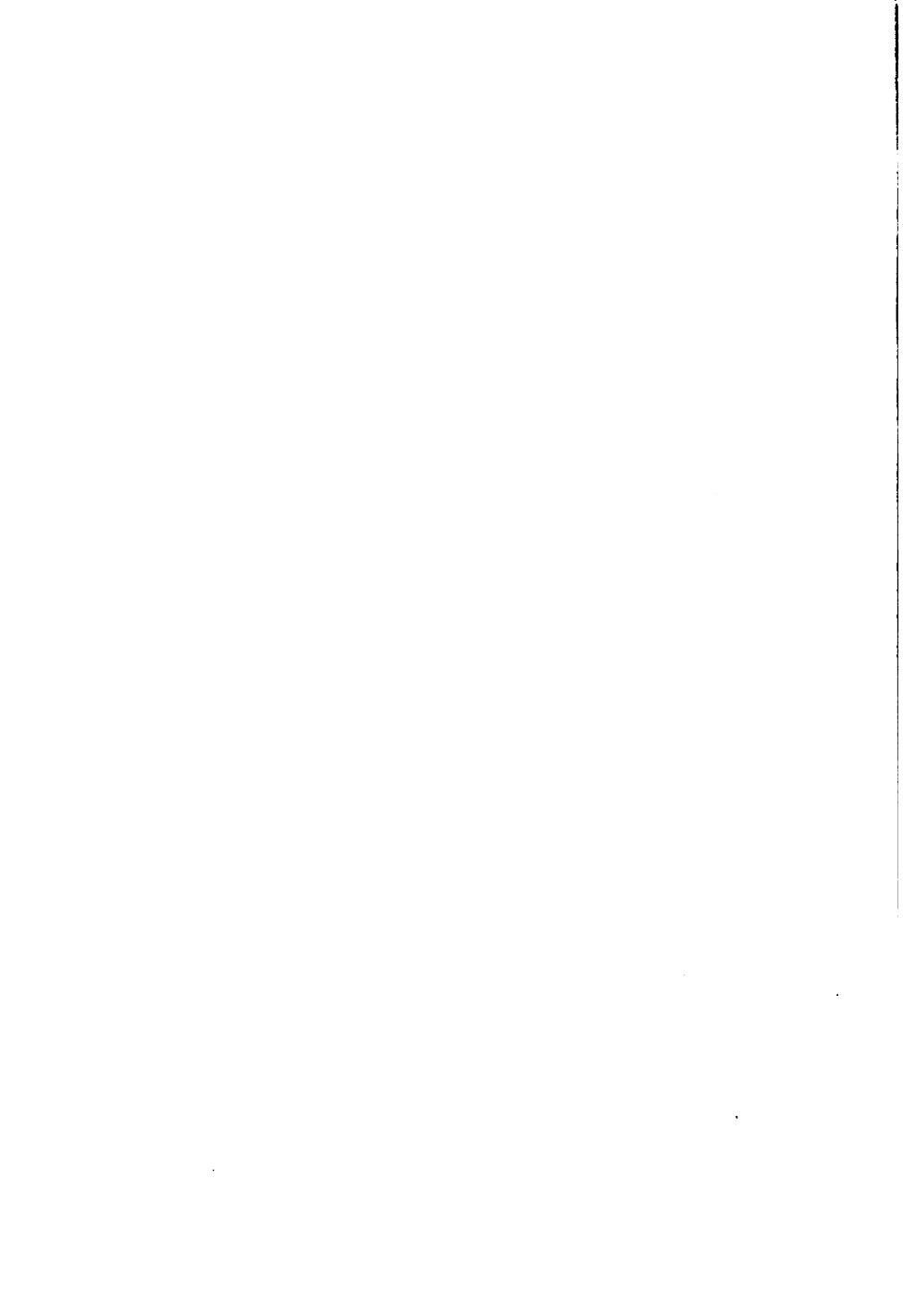
"Oh, all right," he said. "Clow's a friend o' mine, an' I know about his case. He's been askin' me how to square things with the folks at home, an' I told him to make a clean breast o' the whole thing an' vote for the man his people want."

"I'll break him if he does!" threatened Wade, startled into another display of temper. "I've got the papers to put him out of politics, out of —"

"You ain't quick enough, Jack," interrupted Craig. "The man that's first to the public with his story is the one that's goin' to make the other feller do the explainin'. I got his story in writin'.



“‘JACK WADE, YOU’RE GOIN’ TO DRAW OUT O’ THE RACE RIGHT NOW,’”



It shows where you come in, an' takes the edge off your papers. It shows how you got 'em an' how you used 'em. Folks don't like that sort o' business." Craig leaned forward and emphasized his remarks with a long, bony forefinger. "Jack Wade, you're goin' to draw out o' the race right now, or that story will be in the hands o' the Weston folks inside o' five minutes. Mebbe I don't know how to use it best, but you bet they do. They'll have how you tricked the woman, too, an' how you fixed the judge, an' mebbe they can git at the bottom o' the Duncan business. You're needin' a vacation, an' you better take it. There couldn't nobody trust you in the United States Senate. Leastways I couldn't, an' I've learned how things is done since I took my boots off on your front steps up in Chicago."

Wade went from that conference direct to the depot in a carriage. It was rumoured that he was ill. The rumour was verified later from Chicago. He had broken down under the strain of many years of active politics, and would recuperate abroad. Of course his name had to be withdrawn from consideration for the Senatorship; it was understood that he was the first to insist upon that, although only one or two of his intimate friends saw him before

he left to regain his shattered health by foreign travel.

And Carroll, knowing only that Wade had retired from politics for good and sufficient (although unrevealed) reasons, tempered his regret at the loss of an associate with the reflection, "Well, this gives me a chance to be *it*, if I work it right."

VIII.

THE CUPIDITY OF CARROLL

I.

ALLEN SIDWAY went from his conference with Ben Carroll straight to Settlement House. His talk with Carroll had not been soothing, and somehow a visit to Settlement House always made him feel better: after the contamination of practical politics it seemed to have a purifying effect. Perhaps Hazel Hoyne had something to do with this. She was so quietly delightful that her very presence in a room brought peace and tranquillity to his troubled mind. And just now his mind was sorely troubled and his temper sorely ruffled. Since the downfall and departure of John Wade, Carroll practically controlled the local Republican "machine," in which Sidway was a cog.

Carroll never fully understood just what happened to Wade, but the fact that Wade, the astute, had met

his Waterloo in some mysterious way, just when victory seemed to be within his reach, was sufficient to make Carroll cautious and diplomatic. He had been rather blustering and rough in his methods while Wade was on hand to do the clever and tactful work; now he endeavoured to be prudent and cunning himself, to develop some of the qualities that Wade had supplied to the combination previously. He was not entirely successful, frequently reverting to his former brusque and domineering ways; but, feeling the additional responsibility, he was gradually acquiring a "smoothness" that helped him materially. This had enabled him to secure and hold Allen Sidway, with whom he had absolutely nothing in common, outside of politics, and who could not have been held a minute by the methods Carroll had been accustomed to use in the slum wards. Still, Carroll never could be a Wade, no matter how hard he tried, for he was actuated by different and "coarser" motives, and he frequently let impulse change his plan of action.

In the conference with Sidway, just ended, he had endeavoured to be conciliatory, and had succeeded in holding himself in check when a plan in which he had a deep personal interest had been violently opposed. He had opened the interview by asking if

Sidway had any one to propose for the Congressional nomination in the Twelfth District.

"I think Taylor would be a good man," Sidway had replied.

"Are you pledged to him?" Carroll had asked.
"Have you any personal interest in his candidacy?"

"Not at all. I am only interested in having a good man nominated."

"How would David C. Radburn do?"

The trouble had commenced right there. Radburn was a wealthy manufacturer, but there were many rumours afloat that did him no credit. He had been mixed up in some commercial scandals; he had profited by evasions, if not violations, of the Inter-State Commerce law; he had secured favours from local officials that made people talk; he occupied part of a street that belonged to the public, for which he paid no rental — in short, he gained, and held, advantages over many of his competitors that could not be gained and held by straightforward means. And it was charged, although never proved, that he was a persistent violator of the child-labour laws.

All this Sidway had pointed out. The man was one who had the suspicion, rather than the confidence, of the public — at least of so much of the

public as had stopped to give him any consideration whatever. He was not one to whom it would be safe to entrust any part of the law-making power. Carroll had admitted that he was not a man to put up in a close district, but he had insisted that it would be perfectly safe in the Twelfth, which was overwhelmingly Republican. So Sidway had left, disgruntled, and had straightway discovered business that took him to the vicinity of Settlement House. This was not his district, but it was a noteworthy fact that he was always so ready to do a little work there that he had come to know it almost as well as the resident leaders and lieutenants. And, if he had occasion to rest, it was at a time when Hazel Hoyne was most likely to have leisure, and the resting was done at Settlement House.

"I've come for encouragement," he told her.

"Do you need it?" she asked.

"Always," he replied, "and, if I had my way, I wouldn't have to come so far for it."

"Please don't," she said.

"Don't come?" he asked.

"No; don't talk that way."

Sidway was an unusual, as well as a persistent, suitor. He had proposed twice, and had been gently refused both times; but, instead of forsaking Settle-

ment House, he had continued to call as before. It was not lack of pride that induced him to do this, but rather a perfect understanding of Hazel Hoyne. She liked him, — perhaps she loved him, — but she was devoted to her work among the poor. She was doing good and she knew it. A quiet, modest, tender-hearted, womanly woman, she had great influence with the people of that slum neighbourhood. She had come there from choice five years before, after being an occasional visitor for some time, and her enthusiasm had increased with her increasing success in this field of humanitarian work. It held her as the pen or the brush may hold a genius in other lines; she had the same joy in achievement; she was making, or helping to make, real men and women out of very unpromising material. So she had refused to leave with Sidway, and he understood — understood, but never 'despaired. She encouraged his friendship, but retreated the moment he advanced a step beyond that. So he waited patiently.

“Some day,” he insisted.

“Please don't,” she repeated, almost pleadingly.

“Tell me about yourself. What has disturbed you?”

"They're going to nominate Radburn in the Twelfth," he replied, scowling.

"David Radburn?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Oh, Allen, you must prevent that!" she exclaimed. "Why, he's a lawbreaker himself. We all know that over here, where his factory is."

"But they don't know it over there, where he lives," he returned. "They've heard rumours of it, but they don't know it, and he's a prosperous man."

"Surely he won't be elected, even if nominated," she urged. "He isn't really popular, even there."

"Now, Hazel, you know better than that," he said, reprovingly. "He isn't popular, of course, and in a general way a good deal is known that is to his discredit, but nothing has been proved. Furthermore, his offences, in many instances, are the offences of others, and the public has learned to regard them lightly, when it takes time to think of them at all. To cheat an individual is a much more serious matter than to cheat the community or the government. Besides that, the district is almost three to one Republican, and you know how it is when a ward or a district is heavily one way or the other."

"Yes," she admitted, "I do."

"Over here it's all Democratic," he went on. "If the worst Democrat in this ward should get the aldermanic nomination, he would be elected, wouldn't he?"

"I'm afraid he would."

"Well, the situation is just reversed over there. Radburn can't poll his full party vote by a good deal, but, if he's nominated, I don't see how he can fail to be elected."

"Then he mustn't be nominated," she insisted.

"Unfortunately," he laughed, "Ben Carroll thinks he must, and Ben Carroll happens to be the engineer of the 'machine.' I have been, and am, opposed to Radburn, but I am only a very insignificant cog in the 'machine,' and I don't see how the nomination is to be prevented. As I have no favours to ask myself, I can afford to fight him, but Ben will control."

"It will be a crime!" she cried, hotly.

"Oh, not so bad as that," he returned. "Such a man ought never to go to Congress, for whatever influence he has will be exerted to no good purpose in some directions, but I wouldn't call it quite a crime."

In her excitement she rose, took him by the hand, and led him to another room.

"Let me show you what he is doing," she said.

In the room there were a number of little children engaged in kindergarten games. One was apparently older than the others, but of stunted growth, emaciated figure, and weary, listless eyes. She seemed to be mentally deficient, also, and it was really pitiful to see how hard she tried, and how often she failed, to do her little part in the exercises. The young woman in charge coached her kindly, and the child smiled up at her gratefully, but still wearily, and there was no light of interest or understanding in her eyes.

"She fully comprehends only one thing," explained Miss Hoyne.

"What is that?" asked Sidway.

For answer Miss Hoyne called the child to her.

"What can you do?" she asked.

Instantly the child's eyes brightened, not with pleasure or anything allied to it, but with comprehension. At last they had come to something that she knew.

"Sort buttons an' pack 'em," she said.

"Good God!" exclaimed Sidway. "She isn't old enough. It's violation of the law."

"Of course she isn't," returned Miss Hoyne, with the emphasis of angry indignation, "but the necessary age certificate is on file."

"Where?" he demanded.

"Where do you work?" she asked, turning to the girl.

"Radburn's," was the prompt reply.

The child slipped back to her place, and the two returned to the reception-room without a word. Then the indignation of the quiet settlement worker burst forth.

"Now, Mr. Allen Sidway," she said, "you have seen one of the products of David Radburn's factory. It has taken him just about two years to make that of a child, neither bright nor strong, but of fair promise. He has dwarfed her body and dwarfed her mind. Day after day she has stood at one table and done one thing until she knows nothing else. Day after day mind and body have narrowed and shrunk when they should have been growing, expanding. He has almost destroyed a human being—one of God's creatures. He is worse than a murderer! He would make idiots, if he didn't kill, and it's a merciful Providence that releases the soul from the body of many a child who is used to make wealth for such as he. He is a cruel, heartless

monster! He puts a strain upon the child that no child can stand! He injures where he does not kill! He helps to make weak or evil citizenship, and he does make anarchists. He is an enemy to the human race, and so are all like him!"

Sidway tried to speak, but she stopped him with a gesture.

"I tell you, I know!" she went on. "I see the results! I see the heartlessness, the cold-blooded cruelty! To you this is an isolated case, and I'll admit that it is exceptionally sad, for few succumb so soon, but there are others — lots of them. The work is going on every day, — this work of human destruction, — and it makes me burn with indignation that any one should even think of honouring such a man! What a mockery to ask him to make laws! Why not put a burglar on the bench! Or a defaulter in the treasury!"

"You are excited," he urged, although his own blood was hot with indignation.

"I am," she replied, more calmly, "and you would be, too, if you were here day after day, as I am, and then heard this. We are trying to bring that little girl that he almost destroyed back to real life, but do you think we get any help from him? We went to him and explained the situation; we

told him she was there because the money was needed; we asked him if he would carry her on the pay-roll for a short time while we endeavoured to build up her little body — we didn't know about her mind then; and what do you think he answered? He couldn't afford to establish such a precedent. So we workers are paying the little pittance she earned, while we are trying to reclaim her physically and mentally. He has done this for his own profit; we are paying for the privilege of undoing it. And that's the kind of a man, Mr. Allen Sidway, that your great Republican party talks of running for Congress. I tell you, if this outrage is committed, — if you, knowing the facts, can't stop it, — I'll think there is no manhood left in this country."

II.

Allen Sidway went from Hazel Hoyne straight back to Ben Carroll. He expected to gain nothing, but the least he could do was to try. What he had seen and heard was enough to make any man try, and he would try all the harder because of Hazel Hoyne's influence. It had been his original intention to oppose Radburn in a perfunctory, formal sort of way, for the reason that he believed more

strenuous efforts would be a waste of time and labour; but now he was determined to make a real fight.

“One of the products of David Radburn’s factory!” he repeated to himself, and he clenched his fists angrily as he recalled the scene at Settlement House. It was enough to make any man fight! He would be the champion of the child and the representative of the woman. He would do this for either, whatever the cost to him might be. It was an outrage that such a man should be even mentioned for public office; also, in his individual opinion, it was an outrage that any man whom Hazel Hoyne so despised should secure preferment of any kind.

Fortunately, Sidway was in a position to be absolutely independent. He was a young man in politics, — a young man of independent means, who could afford the time and liked the excitement, — and he had no clearly defined political aspirations. Perhaps it had occurred to him that some day his party might see fit to honour him, but he was seeking nothing, and by opposing Carroll he could lose nothing except a little political power and prestige. But Sidway was practical as well as honest. He knew that politics was far from what it should be, and his

influence was always for betterment, but he had no wild dream of heavenly conditions. He took things as they were and made the best of them. Furthermore, he had the wisdom and experience that makes a man diplomatic, so he approached Carroll cautiously. He was determined, but there was no need of a declaration of war until other means had failed. Carroll was powerful. There was practically no chance of defeating him in a fight, and very little chance of winning him in an argument, but it was better to try the argument first. So, concealing his real feelings, he began the interview in a conciliatory spirit.

"Carroll," he said, "can't we settle on some other man for the Twelfth?"

"Quite out of the question," returned Carroll. "Why should we?"

"As a matter of party policy, for one thing," explained Sidway. "Radburn is going to hurt us. He is far from popular, and there are scandals that will be raked up to make trouble."

"Oh, that's all talk," asserted Carroll. "There are mean things said about every successful man, and, if he happens to get into politics, the lies are elaborated. Radburn is all right. There isn't a thing that can be proved against him."

"Perhaps not," admitted Sidway, "but you and I know that some of these charges are true, and it's foolish to think that we are the only wise people in the district. Whether there is proof or not, Radburn is pretty well known for what he is. It hurts to put up such a candidate, even if the district is so strongly Republican that he can be elected in spite of opposition in his own party. Why not try a good clean man like Malcolm Taylor?"

"Why are you so set on Malcolm Taylor?" asked Carroll.

"I'm not," answered Sidway. "Any other will suit me — any one except Radburn. Why, Carroll, that man is wrecking childhood!"

Carroll, accustomed to override opposition, was beginning to be annoyed.

"Nonsense!" he retorted. "I've heard those stories, but they don't amount to anything; there's no proof. I tell you, Sidway, he's going to be nominated and elected. It's all settled."

"Perhaps not," said Sidway, with just a trace of menace in his tone. He knew that Carroll had reason for his confidence, but it annoyed him that the man should be so supremely indifferent to the views of others.

"I suppose you'll oppose him," laughed Carroll, harshly.

"I certainly shall."

"Well," said Carroll, still keeping Wade in mind, "after our previous interview, I rather expected you would, but it's of no importance. We can nominate him without your support."

Here was further evidence of Carroll's confidence. If not sure of his ground, he probably would try in some way to induce or compel Sidway to act with the "machine."

"I've just seen one of his victims, Carroll," exclaimed Sidway, his temper rising, "and if the voters of the Twelfth District saw her, you couldn't elect Radburn assistant keeper of the dog pound! Putting all his other evasions of the law aside, this is enough to condemn the man, and it does! I tell you I've just come from a child-wreck that he made, and it's a damnable outrage to talk of sending such a man to Congress!"

"Now, Sidway," urged Carroll, restraining himself with an effort, "it is no use to talk like that. We'd like to have you with us, but we don't need you, so we're not going to make any fuss if you balk. If you can't stand Radburn, just creep into your tent and keep quiet, and we'll say no more

about it. When you come out after the election we'll be glad to see you."

"But I'm not going to creep into my tent," returned Sidway, angrily; "I'm going to fight!"

"Suit yourself," said Carroll.

"I'm going to fight before the convention, in the convention, and after the convention!"

"Do you mean that you'll bolt the nominee?" asked Carroll.

"If it happens to be Radburn, I will! I'll bolt and I'll fight right up to the minute the polls close election day! And I won't be alone, either!"

"Is this a declaration of war?" demanded Carroll.

"Only if you make it so. What's your interest in this man Radburn, anyway?"

"I'm thinking only of the party."

"That's a lie, Carroll!"

Carroll flushed angrily: this was more than even a tactful politician could be expected to stand.

"There is something back of it," Sidway went on. "I won't say that you're bought, but there's some advantage for you in this matter. You know that Taylor would be a better and more acceptable man; you know that many of the delegates will vote for Radburn under protest; you know that he

is not popular in the district; you know that he ought not to go to Congress; you know that his nomination will hurt the party; and yet you insist. What is there in it, Carroll? Why is he the only Republican in the whole district that you can see? Why are you forcing him? What's the secret, Carroll?"

"You damn fool!" exclaimed Carroll, finally exploding, "you talk like a crazy man!"

"No, I don't," retorted Sidway. "I talk sense, and I am only asking questions now that others will ask later. Of course you won't answer them, Carroll, but they'll be asked by the voters and they'll be asked by the papers — just make up your mind to that. Whatever you get out of this business is going to be dearly bought."

"What you get out of this business," cried Carroll, "will be a political grave. I'll put you in it myself."

Both men had risen and were facing each other angrily.

"But before you do it, Carroll," retorted Sidway, "I'll ask you those questions myself — not here, but on the stump. If you force Radburn on the convention I'll make that a campaign cry. 'What is there in it, Carroll?' will follow you up to and after

election! It's as catching a phrase as the 'Where did you get it?' that followed Croker. Do you remember that, Carroll? Did you ever stop to think how Croker must have hated it — how he must have tried to run from it, to hide from it, to escape it in any way, — how it must have stared up at him day after day? Why, Carroll, when the story of your strange and anxious interest in this matter becomes public, that question will be set to music and the boys will whistle it!"

"Get out of here!" shouted Carroll, shaking his fist in the younger man's face. "You can't talk to me that way in my own office!"

"But I can on the stump, Carroll!" retorted Sidway, as he stopped in the doorway, "and I will! I'll show your man up from one end of the district to the other! If it takes proof to beat him, I'll get proof! It's to be had, Carroll! No man ever systematically violated and evaded the law without leaving proof somewhere, and I'll find it. But I won't forget you, Carroll! You are the responsible party, and every man, woman, and child shall know it; and they'll ask questions — the question, 'What is there in it, Carroll? What is there in it?'"

For some time after Sidway had left Carroll sat

absorbed in thought. He was the political king: he could rule so long as he made no fatal blunder. Had he made one? Had his cupidity lured him to an act of political self-destruction? Carroll reasoned now, where formerly he had merely acted. Having no Wade to look into the future for him, he tried to do it for himself. The lure of gold had led him into many a serious predicament; his "financial friends" had almost wrecked him on other occasions. How would it be this time?

"What is there in it?" he repeated, and scowled. It was a disagreeable phrase to get in general circulation, and it might make considerable trouble. "I wonder what started this hare-brained lunatic, anyway," he muttered. "He can't beat Radburn, of course, but he may hurt me. I wonder if there's any way of stopping him. I'd hate to be haunted by a question — as Croker was."

Then he sent for Radburn, and meanwhile tried to forget; but all the rest of the day, "What is there in it, Carroll?" kept flashing through his mind, and sometimes it seemed almost as if others were framing the question. Two days later he saw it in the head-lines of a newspaper. Sidway had made no idle threat.

III.

Malcolm Taylor was a receptive candidate; Sidway wanted him to become an aggressive one. As a matter of fact, Sidway had developed an amount of energy and aggressiveness that surprised himself. He was so practical a man that he did not ordinarily take much interest in a losing fight, such as this was practically certain to be, but he was going into it heart and soul, nevertheless. It could not be denied that he had been deeply stirred by the child, but that was hardly sufficient to make him tilt at a windmill. For whom, then, would he wage a hopeless battle?

"Heavens! how her eyes flashed!" he commented, and the question was answered. The child's eyes were not the ones that had flashed.

So he went about his task with enthusiasm and dogged determination. It was the enthusiasm of battle, rather than of prospective victory, but it was enthusiasm, just the same, and reasonably effective.

"Go into the fight, and go in hard!" he advised Taylor. "You can't get this nomination without work."

"But can I get it with work?" asked Taylor.

"Probably not," admitted Sidway, "but there's a chance. Fight for it. I'll be with you, and there are others who will rally to a good fighter! If you hold back, you can't expect them to do anything. You must show that you have a chance. It's worth something just to put up a hard fight!"

Taylor gave the subject thoughtful consideration. He would like to go to Congress, of course, and at one time the outlook had been favourable, but Carroll had lured away most of his support. Men who had talked to him encouragingly at first had later decided that they would have to support the "machine" man. Carroll was powerful and determined; he controlled the party machinery; he had ways of "reaching" the politicians; he would be supreme at the primaries and supreme in the convention. Furthermore, it was too late to start a successful campaign.

"In a word," Taylor concluded, "you and I can't beat the 'machine.'"

"But another 'machine' may be able to do it," persisted Sidway. "We'll have a little 'machine' of our own. I'll build it, and get it running. You don't know yet what your support will be, if you come out as an avowed candidate. Declare yourself, Taylor — and fight! Radburn is vulnerable

—let's get after him! Many of the men that Carroll has secured are really favourable to you, and we may get them back. Go into this as a matter of principle, even if you don't win! I'll manage your campaign! I'll give you every minute of my time, and I'll have the little 'machine' running in twenty-four hours! Get your friends together to-morrow, and I'll talk to them; I'll give them the points of attack; I'll show them the weak spots; I'll furnish them with the shafts that will hurt. Why, I can give you the key-note of the campaign now. Radburn is unpopular; he is a weak man politically; disagreeable things are said of his methods; charges have been made against him; he is being forced on the district by Carroll! Bring out all that, and then ask, 'What is there in it, Carroll?' Harp on that question, Taylor. Have every man who speaks for you harp on it,—and, even if you don't win, you'll give Carroll and Radburn the hottest time of their lives."

Taylor was silent for a moment. Then he grasped Sidway's hand impulsively and exclaimed: "I'll do it! I don't expect to win, but I'll make the fight!"

"Good!" cried Sidway. "Don't lose a minute in getting to work, either! Get Dan Collins to

help! He's a strong man, and your friend. I'm going to see what I can do with some of the others."

If Sidway had been less determined, he would have been discouraged in his efforts to build up the little "machine." The story of the child was told, but it produced little effect. It was not an uncommon thing for factory children to be in poor health, and there was no evidence that Radburn knew personally of any violation of the law; in fact, there was no conclusive evidence that the law had been violated, for the child had her age certificate. As for the other charges, they amounted to very little in the opinion of the men approached. Such evasions or violations of the law were not unusual; they had come to be regarded lightly. Others gained trade advantages in the same way. It might be that Radburn was a little bolder and more unprincipled in his methods of securing improper favours from the municipal and other officials, but that was all; and, if the railroads discriminated unjustly and unlawfully for his benefit, why, that was their business.

"Nothing has been proved," said Neil Harmon, "and you'd better let Carroll alone in this matter. He knows what he's doing, and he wants Radburn. He's a good enough man for me, too."

Others took much the same view of the situation. A few admitted that Taylor would be a stronger candidate, but they were playing the game of politics, and they did not care to be identified with a hopeless cause to their ultimate disadvantage. If Taylor had a real chance, it might be different, but he had no chance at all. If they could beat Carroll, they could dictate terms, and would gain rather than lose; if they could not beat him, they preferred to be with him. He was not a man to be needlessly antagonized. Even this slight encouragement was lacking in most cases, for the politicians had their own interests to watch, and were quite satisfied with Carroll's selection. Only a few admitted that any possible combination of circumstances would lead them to swing to Taylor.

"No progress," Sidway told himself, "and I must accomplish something, or all the fire will go out of the campaign. If I can show only a trifling gain, it will help."

In this spirit he sought Larry McHugh, the last man on his list. McHugh's alliance with Carroll was one of convenience only, and there were rumours that the Radburn candidacy did not entirely suit him; but McHugh did not see why he should

make trouble for himself when nothing was to be gained by it.

"Carroll's got the goods all nailed up, addressed, and ready for delivery," he said. "You can't stop him, so what's the use of trying? The nomination is 'cinched,' and that means the election. You couldn't beat the devil himself in that district, if he got his name on the Republican ticket."

"But these stories!" urged Sidway.

"You can't prove them," returned McHugh, "and I don't think there's much in them anyway."

There seemed to be no chance of an immediate conversion, so Sidway resolved to spar for time.

"You'll control some delegates in that convention, McHugh," he suggested.

"Well, rather, but not enough to swing it."

"Are they pledged?"

"Not yet, but they will be before the primaries."

"Can't you keep them unpledged?"

"I can," admitted McHugh, "but why should I? It will make trouble with Carroll right at the start, and what's the use?"

"Because," replied Sidway, "I want a chance to show you that Radburn can be beaten. I won't ask you to oppose him until I can do that; but

leave the way open, McHugh, — give me a little time! Won't you do something for principle?"

"Sure," answered McHugh, "but the principle's got to be worth while. I'm not afraid to fight, Sidway, but there's got to be something worth fighting for, and some chance of success."

Sidway looked at his watch.

"Give me an hour of your time," he said. "I want to show you something."

Half an hour later they sat in a cab opposite the entrance to the plant of the Radburn Button Company, and watched the employees emerge. There were men and women, boys and girls — and children. Sidway called attention to the children. Among them were many weary and listless ones, who should have had no place outside the school, the playground, and the home. They might be of the required age for factory work, but they did not look it. They might have the necessary age certificates, but, if so, the ordinary observer would be inclined to say that some one had sworn falsely. Many there were who were unquestionably entitled to work, under our beneficent laws; but many others unquestionably were not. They came forth slowly and wearily. Except in a few isolated cases, there

was nothing that savoured of either youth or childhood about them; they were tired workers going home. To one who had any love or sympathy for children, it was a pathetic sight.

"Picture the monotony of life to such children!" said Sidway, almost angrily. "Think of them shut up in a factory day after day and week after week, deprived of all health-giving exercise! There is no play! There is no real life! There is only work and ever increasing weakness! It is more than childhood can stand! You and I to-day are more youthful than some of those children!" He pointed out a boy, with thin, white face, who was trudging along stolidly, heavily, his step lacking all the springiness of young life. "The price of Radburn's success," he commented. "Shall we send such a man to Congress?"

McHugh thought of his own children, and sighed.

"It doesn't look right," he admitted, "but they all do it."

"No, they don't," asserted Sidway, warmly. "Many do, but, thank God! all don't! Some live well within the law in this respect, but we want better laws. Can we hope to get them if we honour such men as this? Child labour is a State

affair, of course, but what can we expect of a legislature if we give a Congressman's influence to men like David Radburn?"

"We can't beat him," pleaded McHugh.

"I only ask you to leave the chance open," urged Sidway.

"I'll think about it," said McHugh. "Shall we go back?"

"Not yet," returned Sidway, and he gave instructions to drive to Settlement House. "I'll give you another illustration of the price that is paid for this man's success," he said.

They were in Settlement House only a short time, but, when they came out, McHugh was thoughtful and silent.

"Well?" said Sidway, inquiringly, as they drove along.

"Sidway," returned McHugh, slowly, "I don't think you can win, and I'm not the man to play with fire just for the fun of burning my fingers, but I'll give you the chance you ask. Every delegate that I can control will go to the convention unpledged. That's all that I'll promise now; but, if you get hold of any of the high cards in this game, come to me and I'll help you play the hand."

IV.

"Have you come for encouragement again?" asked Hazel Hoyne, when Allen Sidway appeared at Settlement House.

"No," he replied. "I've come to borrow one of your wards."

"To borrow!"

"Well, temporarily to borrow. Perhaps I'll adopt her later."

"What do you want of her?" asked Miss Hoyne, puzzled.

Sidway smiled quizzically.

"I suppose I might as well be honest about it," he explained, with a pretence of seriousness. "You see, I have decided that it is an impossibility to separate you from these waifs, and so I have decided to take the waifs in order to get you."

"Please don't," she pleaded. He did not know how distressing even playful references to this subject were; how strongly she had been tempted to go with him when he had asked her previously; how her heart wavered; how serious a matter it was to her. She did not like to have him joke about it, and yet his very persistence pleased her. But he refused to heed her gentle protest.

"I will take one first," he said, "and if that doesn't bring you, I'll take another, and then another until you will simply have to follow your charges."

"You know it hurt me very much to —"

"How foolish of you to hurt yourself!" he broke in.

"Please don't," she repeated. "Be serious and tell me what you want."

"Oh, well," he said, "if we must take up minor matters, I want to beat David Radburn, and I think that child-product of his factory can help me do it. I want you to get her and go with me to her home. I think you can talk to her mother better than I can, and I want to get the record of her birth, and also the circumstances under which she entered the factory. Frankly, Hazel, I think child labour is going to be our strongest card in this campaign. If we win at all, we'll win on that."

"Nothing has been said about it yet," suggested Miss Hoyne. "I've been watching the reports, and about all I've seen is 'What is there in it, Carroll?' with occasional references to Radburn's methods of doing business with the city."

Sidway laughed.

"'What is there in it, Carroll?' was my suggestion," he explained, "and I have an idea it hurts,

but it won't defeat Radburn. As for the child labour matter, I am saving that because — well, because I am puzzled to know how to make the most effective use of it. Perhaps, if we can make a strong enough case, Carroll may be forced to drop Radburn. That wouldn't be as gratifying or as dramatic as to beat him openly, but it is the only plan that promises to make his defeat absolutely certain. Will you help me to strengthen my case?"

"Of course, I will," answered Miss Hoyne, "but I'm afraid we can't take the child with us to-day. She seemed so tired and ill this morning that we have kept her in bed. The Radburn factory has done its work more thoroughly than we supposed when we first brought her here."

"Oh, if the delegates could only see and know what we see and know!" cried Sidway, angrily.

"We must do our best to make them know it," she returned, quietly. "I will go with you and do what I can. Mrs. Brody knows me."

Mrs. Brody, the mother of the child, was greatly excited when a carriage stopped in front of her home, and "the good Miss Hoyne," as she was called, entered, accompanied by a man.

"Has anything happened to Jennie?" she cried.

"Oh, Jennie's dead, little Jennie's dead! I know she's dead!"

Miss Hoyne quieted her with a few gentle words, and then Sidway spoke up.

"I am going to take charge of Jennie," he announced. "I am going to see that she has the best expert medical attention. If science can give her physical and mental vigour, I'll see that it's done! You will permit me to do this, won't you, Mrs. Brody?"

The woman was bewildered. She didn't know just what "physical and mental vigour" meant, but she had unlimited confidence in Miss Hoyne, and she looked to her. Miss Hoyne, for her part, was also bewildered. Jennie was a child in whom she had taken the deepest interest, and this announcement was entirely unexpected. As for Sidway, — well, he might have done this, anyway, but very likely his knowledge of Miss Hoyne's deep interest in the child had something to do with his sudden resolve.

"By all means, let him do this," Miss Hoyne advised the mother, after a moment of hesitation. "She needs more than we can give her at Settlement House," but she looked at Sidway in an un-

certain, troubled way. This was entirely aside from their purpose as previously outlined.

"Very well," said Sidway. "Until she is restored to health, she is my ward."

"But her wages," urged the woman, anxiously. "We have to live, and Miss Hoyne has been paying —"

"During the time she is under my charge," broke in Sidway, "I'll pay you twice what she ever has been able to earn."

Again Miss Hoyne looked at Sidway in an uncertain, troubled sort of way. Was he playing a part to gain the woman's confidence? She could not believe it of him, and yet this was a most extraordinary task for a young man to undertake.

"That being settled, Mrs. Brody," Sidway went on, "I want to know all about Jennie. How old is she?"

The woman was instantly on the alert.

"There's others younger in the factory," she said, "and I had to do it."

"Had to do what?" asked Sidway.

"Tell Mr. Sidway the whole truth," urged Miss Hoyne. "I promise you that no harm will come of it."

"But Jennie'll never get her job back," pleaded the woman.

"She never will, if I can help it," said Sidway, earnestly, "but you needn't worry about that. It's worth something to me to save her." He gave Miss Hoyne a quick glance that made the colour come to her cheeks, and then added: "And I'll cheerfully pay."

The woman understood only that, for an indefinite period, she was to get more than Jennie ever before had earned, but that was enough. She dared not offend this new benefactor.

Then the truth came out. She had taken Jennie to the factory when the child was nine years old, and had truthfully stated her age. The reply was that they could not take her, although they had work for a number of children just then, — work for which they did not pay sufficient wages to tempt the older boys and girls. Was Mrs. Brody sure about the age? Well, Mrs. Brody hesitatingly admitted that she might have made a mistake of a year. But even that wouldn't do.

"When she is twelve," the superintendent had told the mother, "you can bring her back."

Mrs. Brody had taken counsel with neighbours who had children at work, with the result that she

went back with Jennie the following day, and Jennie was then twelve years old, — the age required by law before a girl was allowed to work in a factory.

“What did the superintendent say, then?” asked Sidway.

“Why, he just laughed and said: ‘How fast the years fly!’ and then he told me where to go to sign a paper about her age, and I did it.”

“Isn’t that outrageous!” cried Miss Hoyne, hotly. “Think of sending such a man to Congress!”

“It is wrong,” said Sidway, “but he is not defeated yet. There is no evidence that he has any personal knowledge of this violation of the law.”

“Oh, there’s lots of others!” exclaimed the woman. “I can tell you a dozen of them.”

“Give me their names,” said Sidway, “and then tell me the exact date of Jennie’s birth, and where she was baptized.”

On the way back to Settlement House, Miss Hoyne was very thoughtful. She had helped Sidway, but she was troubled and doubtful.

“Allen Sidway,” she exclaimed at last, “if you don’t redeem your promise to that poor woman, I’ll never speak to you again.”

Sidway looked at her in astonishment.

"Redeem my promise!" he repeated. "Of course, I'll redeem my promise. I never thought of doing anything else."

"I don't mean in a perfunctory sort of way; I mean really and truly," she persisted. "Do you realize what your promise to that woman means?"

"I do."

"Is it part of the game of politics?"

"It has nothing to do with politics."

"Wasn't the promise given to induce her to talk?"

"No. It was given — well, for the child, in part."

"I'm glad of that," said Miss Hoyne, and with what seemed like a sigh of relief.

Sidway was moody during the rest of the ride, but when he helped her out of the carriage at Settlement House he kept her hand a moment.

"Have you so poor an opinion of me as that?" he asked.

"So many promises are made in politics," she answered, "and they are held so lightly. I knew you would redeem it by seeing that the child has every attention now, and — and for some time — as long as any one but a mother would expect. I didn't think, however, you knew how much you were

promising, and — and you might lose your interest with the passing of the campaign that has made her of so much importance to you. It may take years to bring that child back to real life.”

She tried to withdraw her hand, but he still held it.

“With your help, I’ll do it, no matter how long it takes,” he insisted.

“How with my help?” she asked.

“I put her in your charge absolutely,” he said. “I authorize you to engage the best specialists and to place her wherever she will receive the best and most skilful attention, and I will cheerfully meet every expense incurred in her behalf. Just as long as this is necessary it shall continue, and you shall be the judge. Will you do this for me?”

“No,” she answered, but as she said it she smiled in such a way that it stopped the protest he was about to utter. “But I will for the child,” she added.

“Of course, for the child,” he said, “but I should so much like to think that you are doing just a little of it for me.”

She became instantly more serious.

“Allen,” she said, “you are doing this for me. It is flattering, but I could think so much more of

you if you were doing it for the child — for humanity. Won't you eliminate me from consideration in the matter?"

"I'll take you into partnership," he answered, "and we'll work together — for the child."

"Would you assume all the responsibility and redeem your pledge to the letter if I refused?"

"Yes. Your interest stimulated mine, but now I would do this anyway."

"May I go now?" she asked, for he still held her hand, entirely unmindful of the fact that passing strangers looked at them curiously.

"Are you sorry for your doubts?" he persisted.

"Sincerely sorry," she answered. "I'm sure I did you an injustice."

He slowly released her hand, but he looked at her in such a way that she was blushing furiously as she hurried into Settlement House. She did not say so even to herself, but she knew now that sooner or later she would surrender.

V.

Malcolm Taylor and his friends continued their vigorous campaign, but Sidway did not appear in it to any appreciable extent. His work in organiz-

ing and systematizing the little "machine" was of the utmost value, but he made no public appearance on the stump. He provided the speakers with material, he attended to many details, he induced many lukewarm supporters to become active, he assisted in raising the necessary funds, he advised in the appointment of watchers and ticket-peddlers, but he remained steadfastly in the background. Nevertheless, Carroll knew who was doing the really effective work and supplying the ammunition. He was still certain of victory, but he was annoyed. "What is there in it, Carroll?" brought to his lips harsh and uncomplimentary exclamations. He even spoke bitterly to Radburn at times.

"I'm paying a big price to do this for you," he said.

"Well," returned Radburn, "you're getting a big price for it. I'm letting you in on that State concession deal."

"I helped you to get the concession," suggested Carroll.

"But it was my plan," retorted Radburn. "You never would have thought of it if it hadn't been for me, and you couldn't have done anything with it alone, anyway. My holdings and knowledge of the conditions are what made the deal possible."

"Oh, I'll stick by you," said Carroll.

"You've got to," asserted Radburn.

Carroll looked ugly for a moment, but Radburn was right: Carroll could not afford to drop him.

"Besides," Radburn went on, "you can afford to drop politics after this."

"But I don't want to drop politics," protested Carroll. "I like the game. I've acquired the political habit, and it's hard to break. You want to go to Congress, and I want to control here. I tell you I don't want to drop politics, Radburn, no matter how much money I may have, and that's why this candidacy of yours hurts. You'll win, but it will weaken me. Why, I'd rather give one thousand dollars than have 'What is there in it, Carroll?' chanted as it is now."

"Can't you stop it?"

"How?"

"If there was any way of forcing, or inducing, Taylor to withdraw, it would leave Sidway high and dry," suggested Radburn. "I confess I'd pay something for that myself."

"If you offered money to Taylor he'd knock you down."

"Oh, not money, of course," explained Radburn, "but he's in a losing fight, and he knows it. If he

had a certainty of something else — which you could give him — it would be a mighty big temptation.”

“I don’t think he’s that kind of a man,” returned Carroll. “He’d think he was deserting his friends.”

“Still it ought to be worth trying,” urged Radburn. “Frankly, Carroll, I’m afraid that Sidway has some other cards to play — not winning cards, perhaps, but cards that I’d hate to see played. My superintendent tells me there was a photographer just outside the factory the other day when the children were leaving work.”

“What’s that?” exclaimed Carroll, suddenly alert.

“Oh, we don’t know that Sidway had anything to do with it, but there was a photographer there.”

“Why, you fool!” cried Carroll, “who but Sidway would want pictures of your child-workers? And it’s a hundred to one they’ll be circulated everywhere! Where’s your sense, man? Why didn’t you tell me this before?” Carroll was silent for a moment, and then he asked, sharply, “Radburn, are those children under age?”

“They all have their certificates,” returned Radburn, evasively.

"Damn it! I'm not asking about certificates; I want facts!" exclaimed Carroll, irritably. "There have been some mighty disagreeable child-labour stories in circulation. Are they true?"

"They can't be proved," said Radburn.

"Are they true?"

"Well," admitted Radburn, uncomfortably, "pictures of some of those children would have a mighty injurious effect."

"They're true, and they know they're true," asserted Carroll. "Now, Radburn," and he became very sarcastic, "is there any other trifling detail of this business that you haven't deemed of sufficient importance to mention to me?"

"I came here to tell you," replied Radburn, "that Sidway has been looking up records in the city hall, but your talk of what it's costing you made me forget it. You know what those records will show."

"I know what they won't show," retorted Carroll. "They won't show that you're giving any compensation for the alley that you had vacated or for the street that you have fenced in for your private purposes."

"Others have done the same thing," argued Radburn.

"But the others are not running for office," as-

served Carroll. "I don't mind telling you, Radburn, that you're a mighty vulnerable man, and there's a whole lot of trouble ahead."

"What's to be done?" asked Radburn.

Carroll pondered the subject before replying. Then he rapidly outlined a plan, as a result of which Radburn wrote a letter from his dictation, and then hurried away to get the age certificates of various children in his employ. As soon as he had gone Carroll sent for Alderman Kelly. Kelly was not pleased with the part assigned to him, but he had to accept it, and he also wrote a letter from dictation. Carroll had made him politically, and Carroll could unmake him, so Carroll could command. After writing the letter, Kelly went to see Taylor. It was a thankless task, but Carroll insisted, and Kelly obeyed. Carroll thought that he was beginning to surpass Wade as a strategist.

"Tell him," said Carroll, "that he can go to the Legislature if he will draw out of this race. If he wants to break into politics, this is his chance, and by withdrawing he gives up nothing, for he can't possibly win, and he knows it. We are offering him a certainty of success for a certainty of defeat."

Carroll did not expect this offer to be accepted, but Radburn's report of the conditions led him to

make it. And there was another thing to be gained. If Taylor did not accept, he would certainly tell Sidway of the offer, and in all likelihood that would bring Sidway to Carroll, which was just what Carroll desired. He wanted to see Sidway before the latter made use of the material he had been gathering. He rather expected that Sidway would make one more attempt to have Radburn dropped, but he wished to make sure of it. Meanwhile, he prepared for any unexpected move by having his own material put in shape for instant use.

As a matter of fact, things happened just as he had expected. Taylor was indignant that such an offer should be made to him, and what he said to Kelly was extremely forceful. He had given thoughtful consideration to the matter before entering the race, and nothing could induce him to withdraw. Furthermore, carrying out the plan agreed upon, he insisted that he had a good chance of success. He would not concede for a moment that his cause was hopeless, and he would not desert those who had flocked to his support, even if it were. Then he told Sidway all about it.

"You withdraw!" cried Sidway. "Well, I guess not! If any one is to withdraw, Radburn is the man, and I guess it's just about time to make

that plain. Why, Taylor, I've got a case worked up against him that is almost perfect; and if he can't see it, I'll bet Carroll can. I've got the material to make them both mighty sick of this business."

Thereupon Sidway went to Carroll.

"We might as well finish this game right now," he told the latter. "If I can't beat your man — and I think I can — I can make your victory so costly that you'll never want another like it. I can just about drive you out of politics, Carroll, if you force this thing."

Sidway was angry, or he would have been more diplomatic. The attempt to buy off Taylor was more than he could stand.

"If you can beat him, why do you come to me with any proposition?" asked Carroll, who had been at some pains to plan his course in this interview.

"Because if I can get you to drop him, I'll make a certainty of what is now only a probability," answered Sidway, frankly, "and when you know the facts I think you will be rather anxious to prevent the kind of a campaign I intend to make."

"You've made it about as nasty as possible already," retorted Carroll.

"Oh, no, I haven't," asserted Sidway. "So far we've only had a little preliminary skirmish. I tell

you, Carroll, it's going to be warm from now on. I have here," and he produced them, "some pictures of Radburn's child-workers issuing from the factory. Look at them, Carroll!"

Carroll glanced at them disinterestedly.

"What are you going to do with them?" he asked.

"I'm going to have them reproduced on circulars," said Sidway, somewhat disconcerted by Carroll's tone and manner, but still inclined to be aggressively confident. "I'm going to put at the top of the circulars, 'Will you let this man make laws for you?' and beneath the picture, 'Some of Radburn's child-workers,' and beneath that in large type, 'What is there in it, Carroll?' That will make people think a little! That will show them the violation of the child-labour law!"

"Is that all?" asked Carroll, although the reference to that annoying question made him scowl.

"No, that isn't all," retorted Sidway, hotly, for the carelessness with which the question was asked angered him. "I have the birth records of some of the children and the baptismal records of others. I've tried to make a pretty good case of it, Carroll, and I think I have succeeded. These things ought

to prove real effective in the newspapers and the campaign circulars and posters."

"Anything more?" asked Carroll. Sidway should have known that Carroll was seeking to get a full statement of his case, but for once he was too excited to think. He was angry when he came, and every moment was adding to his passion.

"Yes, there is more," he said. "I have records to show how your man has been and is defrauding the city. I have proof of his occupation of an alley and part of a street without compensation of any kind, and I'll see that these facts are widely circulated. I'll head them, 'How Radburn makes his money,' and I'll put beneath, 'What is there in it, Carroll?' I don't intend to let you escape, Carroll. I know it hurts, and I'll see that you're coupled with your man in everything. And the public will know that you're not forcing that kind of a man for nothing."

"Now, Sidway," said Carroll, trying to be cool and confidently patronizing, "you ought not to get the idea in your head that you know the game of politics just because we've let you help us in some other campaigns. You've got a whole lot to learn. Why, I've got you checkmated before you move." He took a lot of printer's proofs from his desk.

"Here are facsimiles of the age certificates of those children, all ready for distribution. No matter what you may think you have discovered, here is evidence to clear Radburn of all intentional violation of the law. What you have gleaned from the parents is directly contradicted by them under oath. If the law has been violated the parents are to blame."

The production of the circulars was like a dash of cold water to Sidway. He knew of the existence of the age certificates, but here was evidence that his own plans were known before he was fully ready to put them in operation.

"I don't think those age certificates will count for much," he said, more calmly, "when the other facts are known. No one could look at those children without knowing they are under age, and if Radburn would cheat the city, it is the natural presumption that he is a party to the violation of the child-labour law."

"Radburn has not intentionally cheated the city," persisted Carroll, producing three letters. "I have here a letter that Radburn wrote to Alderman Kelly two years ago, offering compensation, and I also have a letter of recent date from Alderman Kelly, apologizing for his delay in attending to the matter. If you will read it, you will see that the original

offer was mislaid. It is a very fair offer, too — the offer of a good citizen. There was some agitation about vacated streets and alleys at that time, and Radburn immediately wrote to say that he had not understood that payment for such concessions was expected, but, if so, he would do what was right by the city."

"Sounds fishy," commented Sidway.

"But we have the letters," said Carroll.

"That two-year-old letter looks to me pretty fresh."

"But Alderman Kelly admits over his own signature that he received it two years ago; and in this third letter Radburn tells him to see that the matter has immediate attention, and that he is prepared to pay reasonable rental from the time the first letter was written. Isn't that fair, Sidway? And doesn't that effectively dispose of your campaign material?"

"Carroll, I think that's all a trick," asserted Sidway.

"But it settles you, Sidway," laughed Carroll, in his disagreeable way. "This game of politics is not so easy to play as people think."

Sidway left, crestfallen. He was satisfied that there had been trickery, but, as matters stood, the

situation was unquestionably more favourable to Radburn than to Taylor. Those three letters and the age certificates would more than counteract the effect of all the facts he had gleaned.

Carroll sent for Kelly.

"The letters did the business, Kelly," he said.

"They ought to," growled Kelly. "If they were made public they would make a lot of trouble for me."

"Who ever thought of making them public?" asked Carroll.

VI.

"How is our ward?" asked Sidway.

"About the same," replied Miss Hoyne. "I have consulted with Doctor Agnew in relation to her, but he has not yet decided just what to do. He thinks it may be well to send her to the country after awhile, if we can find a suitable place, but for the present he wants to have her where he can give her his personal attention. It's something of a problem to know just where in the country to send her, anyway. It's not like sending the ordinary waif out to play, for her mental and physical condition necessitate watchful care."

"I know where I can rent a nice little cottage," suggested Sidway.

"But who would take care of her?"

"We would."

Miss Hoyne did not say "Please don't!" this time, but she hastily changed the subject. Still there was something in the way she did it that was not altogether distasteful to Sidway.

"How is our little 'machine'?" she asked. The use of the plural pronoun was unexpected and gratifying. Here was another partnership arrangement.

"I am sorry to say," he reported, "that the little 'machine' is not working well. I fear there is something wrong with the engineer." Then he told her of his interview with Carroll.

"Are you discouraged?" she asked.

"I'm not letting any one else know it," he answered.

"I always thought you were a very persistent and determined man," she said.

"You have reason to," he returned, with a laugh.

"Are you persistent only in one thing?" she retorted.

"I'm still fighting," he insisted.

"But not with spirit," she asserted, and then she

added: "Allen Sidway, I hate a man who gives up! Think of our ward! She ought to be enough to defeat Radburn! What have a lot of lying letters got to do with her? I don't believe they'd dare produce those letters, anyway."

"I'll fight to the end," said Sidway, but he left, depressed and thoughtful. What new and effective move could he make? He prided himself on his resourcefulness, but what could he do?

Suddenly he stopped short in his walk.

"Can it be done?" he asked himself.

People passing saw a man irresolute. Twice he turned back toward Settlement House, and twice he turned away. Then, as if suddenly decided, he called a cab and drove to see Doctor Agnew. His interview with the doctor was brief, but it gave him new life, and he was again an enthusiast when he found Larry McHugh.

"I've got it!" he exclaimed. "We can beat Radburn!"

"Can we?" asked Larry, with the air of man unconvinced.

"It's a practical certainty."

"Well, you'll have to show me," said Larry.

"We'll give them something 'dramatic,' persisted Sidway.

"Tableaux don't win in politics," returned Larry. "I'm holding my men unpledged, but I can't see anything but Radburn in this campaign yet."

Sidway unfolded his plan, and Larry considered it.

"If it can be done," said Larry, at last.

"Why can't it be done?" demanded Sidway.

"I'd like to try it," admitted Larry. "It would make a sensation, wouldn't it? And we'd just about be the people — if we won. Say!" and Larry began to get enthusiastic, "that little coup would get the big type in the papers from one end of the country to the other. But it will take clever management to put the scheme through."

"You're a clever manager," insinuated Sidway.

"I'm fair," admitted Larry. Then after a pause: "Sidway, I'll take a chance and go in with you on this. I'll make the fight on the floor of the convention, and I'll see if I can't add to the list of unpledged delegates that we can swing at the right moment. I told you when you could show a good chance for success I'd come out for you, and I'll do it."

From that moment McHugh became an aggressive personality in the campaign. He made no speeches, but the results of his activity were so ap-

parent that Carroll sent for him. McHugh was slow in responding, which had the effect of making Carroll anxious. He knew that McHugh had no great love for him, but he had counted on his support, nevertheless, and it was support that he did not care to lose. It might be difficult to hold others in line if McHugh deserted, for he was given the credit of being too practical and experienced a politician to take up a losing cause. So his delay in responding to the summons was disquieting. The fact that he avoided an interview indicated that he was perfecting plans that he did not care to discuss and that would not be pleasing to Carroll.

In this emergency Carroll, having failed to bring McHugh to him, adopted the wise course of going to McHugh.

"Larry," said Carroll, "what's the matter?"

"Nothing," replied Larry; "everything is as lovely as it can be."

"I've heard queer stories about you," persisted Carroll.

"Have you?" returned Larry.

"You gave me to understand awhile ago," said Carroll, "that your delegates would go to the convention unpledged, but that they would be almost certainly for Radburn."

"Yes; that was awhile ago," said Larry.

The tone both annoyed and puzzled Carroll. It was not aggressive, but neither was it conciliatory; and there certainly was an intimation that conditions had changed. All in all, it was most unlike McHugh, the cautious politician.

"Larry," said Carroll, "I don't know why you didn't want those delegates pledged, but we've been in a good many fights together, and I had confidence in you, so I let it go."

"You let it go because you had to," asserted McHugh, and now there was a trace of aggressiveness in his tone. "I wouldn't pledge them."

"I relied on your assurance that they were almost certainly mine, but now I want it made a certainty."

"You don't get it," returned McHugh.

Carroll was startled. This was out-and-out defiance.

"Don't be a fool, Larry," he urged. "We have enough without your people, and you'll only make trouble for yourself if you balk. With you we'll have more than two-thirds of the convention; without you we'll still have —"

"Without me," broke in McHugh, "you'll have a hard fight to get a bare majority. When you lose me you lose Neil Harmon."

"You don't know what you're talking about, Larry," asserted Carroll, but he was troubled nevertheless. "I've seen Harmon."

"So have I," retorted McHugh, grimly, "and he thinks so well of my judgment that his delegates will be unpledged and ready to follow my lead. They don't think much of Radburn, anyway, and when my circulars are put out —"

"What circulars?" demanded Carroll, instantly alert.

"Those relating to Radburn's dealings with the city."

"Only those?"

"Aren't they enough?"

"Well, hardly," laughed Carroll. "I thought Sidway had abandoned that plan after his interview with me. Didn't he tell you that I had that move checkmated?"

"Oh, yes," returned McHugh, "but, Carroll, you can't bluff me. I've been in the business too long. You daren't produce those letters, and you know it. If you do I'll tear your campaign wide open! If you let those letters see the light of day there'll be an expert with a microscope at work on them before you know what's happened."

"I ought to kick you through the window!" thundered Carroll.

"But you won't," retorted McHugh. "I know you, Carroll, and I know your tricks. I know Radburn, and I know his nature. He never made any such offer as that two years ago; he never made any such offer until this campaign was well under way. It's a bluff!"

"The moment your circulars appear, mine will follow," threatened Carroll. "I'll show you whether it's a bluff."

McHugh leaned over his desk and shook an accusing finger in Carroll's face.

"Now listen to me, Carroll," he said. "If you put out those circulars, you've got to produce the original letters. That will be demanded, and you'll stand convicted of dishonest trickery if you don't. Now just hang on these few words of mine! The moment one of those circulars appears I will publicly offer you five hundred dollars cash to produce the originals and submit them to inspection! I'll do better than that. I'll give you five hundred dollars right now if you will put those letters in the hands of a third party for examination."

For a moment Carroll was silent. His "bluff" had been called and called hard. Then he protested

that he would present his case to the public and not to the opposition.

"You'll not present it anywhere," retorted McHugh. "If you dare do it, now is the time. Get your circulars out, for mine are being distributed while we are sitting here."

Carroll was startled and very much disturbed. This charge — the only one that he could not refute convincingly — gave point to the question, "What is there in it, Carroll?" It showed the kind of a man he was forcing; it led to inferences as to the reason for his extraordinary interest in this particular candidate; it made suspicion almost a certainty; it was the culminating feature of a chain of incidents that led to but one conclusion. But success dazzles the public until it is unable to see what lies behind it; in defeat only is danger.

"I've got to win," was Carroll's decision. "It's my political finish if I don't."

VII.

Carroll made the fight of his life at the primaries, and he won. But the victory was costly and unsatisfying, for the little "machine" did strenuous work, and demonstrated that it was well organized. The

circulars relating to Radburn's dealings with the city had been distributed and had remained unanswered, in spite of the fact that they did considerable harm. After his interview with McHugh, Carroll had not dared put out the answering circulars. Indeed, as a matter of fact, he never had intended to do so, for the risk was too great. They had been prepared solely for the purpose of "bluffing" Sidway, and they would have been effective if McHugh had not suddenly become an active partisan. All of which led Carroll to say harsh things about McHugh. The latter had caught him in a "bluff" and had forced him to tacitly admit it — a fact that rankled. To this extent at least he had been defied and beaten; he had been put in a very awkward position; he had been made to appear foolish and insignificant to those who knew the facts, and his only consolation was that few knew them.

"What is there in it, Carroll?" had followed him up to the very morning of the primaries, and McHugh's circulars had given added significance to the question. Why was he forcing this vulnerable man? Why was he making such a bitter fight for one who was so unpopular with many of the party? He knew that these questions were in the minds of many people, even though few put them in words,

and he knew that there was dissatisfaction. Some of the pledged delegates would redeem their pledges under protest, and would welcome a good opportunity to desert. Then, too, in order to get a bare majority of the delegates he had had to make promises that it would be difficult to fulfil; he had been forced to use every weapon and every inducement at his command; to threaten some, cajole others, and apportion patronage with a lavish hand. It was decidedly mortifying to be forced to such extremities by a combination of mushroom growth — and to gain so little by it, for he realized that it would take watchful care to retain his advantage: a momentary lapse might lose him all.

“And to think,” he muttered, “that Sidway is at the bottom of all this! A man who learned what little he knows of practical politics from me! How did he get McHugh, the practical man? How did he convince him that there was a chance of winning? How did he make him think they could accomplish anything with the material he had collected? And why didn’t they use the rest of it?”

Carroll scowled. The affair certainly had been cleverly managed. They had used only the facts that he dared not try to refute, although he knew that they had the names and ages of many of the

child-workers in Radburn's factory, in addition to the photographs. If they had followed Sidway's original plan of circulating these facts, he could have come back with the age certificates, but to produce those before definite charges were made would be folly. He could score a point if the charges were made, but it would be suspicious and hurtful for him to make the first move.

But the primary election had given him control of the convention, even though the margin was small, and much might be made of that advantage. A man must feel deeply before he cares to be identified with a losing cause, so there was a chance to get some of the unpledged candidates. The moment the result was known he began his work.

"Well, we win," he said to Neil Harmon.

"Yes," admitted Harmon.

"Will you be with us?" he asked.

"No," answered Harmon; "at least not now."

There was something of promise in this, so Carroll persisted.

"You will be later?" he insinuated.

"Perhaps."

"On the second ballot?"

Harmon hesitated. Carroll certainly had a majority of the convention as matters stood, and Harmon

did not wish to be left stranded. He had confidence in McHugh, but all men are fallible, and he did not care to go down to defeat with any one, especially when he had no deep personal interest in any particular candidate. He had promised to hold his men unpledged and deliver them to McHugh, if McHugh could nominate, but the first ballot would be sufficient to redeem that promise. The details of McHugh's plan were unknown to him, and the outlook was not bright for those who opposed Carroll.

"If you can nominate on the first," he said, evasively, "why do you want me on the second?"

"I want vindication," replied Carroll, with considerable feeling. "I have been viciously assailed in this campaign, and I want the slanders refuted by the vote of the convention; I want a majority so big that no one can say I forced this thing. Promise to come to me on the second, and I'll see that there is no nomination on the first."

"What's your plan?"

"Will you be with me?"

Again Harmon hesitated. Here was a chance to play both ways — to win, no matter what the convention did. If McHugh could nominate on the first ballot (which seemed to be out of the question), he would be with him; if he could not, his promise

would be redeemed, and he could swing to Radburn and still be with the victor.

"If you have your eye on anything in politics," insinuated Carroll, "you can count on my support. As a matter of self-protection, I've simply got to put Radburn through by a good majority."

"I'll do it," said Harmon. "If there's no nomination on the first, I'm with you on the second. Now, what's your plan?"

Carroll gave a sigh of relief. He had evolved the plan during the conversation, and it seemed to him a good one.

"I'll have Blakeley put in nomination as a dark horse," he explained. "Some of the unpledged delegates will vote for him while waiting to see how the wind blows, and that will weaken McHugh. I'll have some of my men vote for him, also. Then, on the second ballot, my men will jump to Radburn, you'll swing into line, and with that start we'll catch every waverer and sweep the convention. Why, Harmon, if it works right, we can come pretty near to making it unanimous! The average man can be mighty easily stampeded by one who knows how to do it."

Carroll now felt that he had the battle fairly won, but he was not a man to take any chances. So he

sounded Sidway and McHugh. In view of the primaries they might be more tractable, and it would be a double victory and a double vindication if he could bring them to the support of Radburn. No one knew better than Carroll how the campaign had weakened him; no one knew better than he how necessary to his future it was to carry the convention by more than a narrow margin, and thus apparently disprove the charges made against him.

But Sidway was defiant.

"I tell you now what I told you before," he said. "If Radburn is nominated, I'll fight him at the polls."

"You're a fool!" exclaimed Carroll.

"But I'm not a knave!" retorted Sidway.

"You're a dead duck politically!" asserted Carroll, hotly, for somehow this young man, more than any other, could rouse his anger.

"You're going to be reasonably busy looking out for yourself," answered Sidway. "If you're wise, you won't waste any time on my affairs."

McHugh was not so aggressive, but neither was he tractable.

"Now that the thing is settled," Carroll said to him, "I'd like to make Radburn's majority something worth while, and, now that you've made your

little fight, I suppose you're ready to come back into camp."

"Who said it was settled?" demanded McHugh.

"We have the delegates," asserted Carroll.

"But can you keep them?" asked McHugh.

This fairly took Carroll's breath away. That Sidway could be obstreperous was not surprising, but McHugh was a practical man, who was not disposed to let sentiment sway him.

"Now, Larry," urged Carroll, "I'm giving you your last chance, and, just to show you how strong we are, I'll tell you that we have some of your people pledged to come to us on the second ballot."

"Carroll," returned McHugh, "there isn't going to be any second ballot."

Carroll was confident that he knew better than that, but he was up late that night, nevertheless, perfecting his plans for the convention the following day, and occasionally asking himself, "Now, what the devil can I have overlooked?" For, although his reason told him that he would control and win, there was something in the attitude of the two men that made him anxious. He could think of no possible move that would give them victory, but he was sure they had some plan.

"And they're not conducting this campaign along

the beaten lines that I know so well," he growled. "They keep me guessing most of the time."

VIII.

Carroll discovered what he had overlooked at breakfast the next morning. When he opened his paper he fairly jumped out of his chair, for there on the first page was a reproduction of one of the pictures of Radburn's child-workers. The birth and baptismal records of many of the children were given, also, and in large type there was the text of a circular. This circular handled both Radburn and Carroll "without gloves." It began with the question, "Are you going to have this man forced upon you?" Then it referred in strong terms to Radburn's dealings with the city and apparent contempt for the child-labour laws, and asked, "Shall Carroll rule?" After that, it told of the dissatisfaction with Radburn, of Carroll's arbitrary and domineering stand, and inquired, "What is there in it, Carroll?"

"Are the sentiments and wishes of the Twelfth District being defied for nothing?" it continued. "Is this would-be Czar doing this for love of either Radburn or the public? Is he flying in the face of

public opinion that good may come of it? Is he that kind of a man? Does his record make such a motive seem probable or even possible? Study the situation carefully, consider his arbitrary course, think of Radburn's child-workers, and the same old question must inevitably come to mind, —

“ ‘What is there in it, Carroll?’ ”

“Damn the man who invented that question!” muttered Carroll. “Damn Sidway!”

For it hurt. In view of the pledges, there was little likelihood that it would affect the vote of the convention, but it might. In any event, it added to the difficulty of holding unwilling men in line. He knew that he would have to face and answer many arguments before the vote; that he would be urged to drop Radburn.

His wife noticed that he was not very hungry that morning. A little toast and coffee was all he wanted, and he disposed of that in just about three minutes. Then he hastened to his office, and, as he expected, found a number of men awaiting him.

“Those circulars are all over town,” said one of them.

“Where are the ones that you prepared?” asked Radburn, who was visibly nervous and anxious. “There's yet time to put those out, isn't there?”

"They were never printed," answered Carroll. "They were of no use to us as long as Sidway held his back, and I had only a few proofs."

"Hell!" ejaculated Radburn, and ordinarily Radburn was far from a profane man.

"But they're in type," added Carroll. "I told the printer to be ready to put them to press at a moment's notice."

"Oh, McHugh has only done this to annoy," urged Dixon, a cool and calculating politician. "He knows it won't win, for we've got the delegates."

"But it hurts," protested Radburn. "I want the charge answered."

"I'm going to have it answered," asserted Carroll, and he called up the printer and ordered the circulars put to press.

"As soon as a thousand are ready," he instructed, "rush them over to me."

"Can't get them out much before noon," the printer replied.

"Then send them to me at the convention-hall," ordered Carroll.

Turning to the others, he outlined a plan for action.

"We must round up all our delegates," he said,

“and see that they understand the situation. Tell them this slander will be refuted! Don’t give them a chance for any possible excuse to break away, for we haven’t any too strong a grip on some of them. Lay down the law to them, if necessary! Remind them that they’re pledged, and that it’s their finish if they desert. I don’t think they’d dare do it, anyway, but we don’t want to take any chances! Tell them that Harmon’s men are coming to us on the second ballot, and that it isn’t intended to nominate on the first, but that they must keep in line.”

“Have you got Harmon?” asked Radburn, surprised and pleased.

“They’re promised on the second,” said Carroll. Then, turning to Dixon: “Have you got a good grip on your delegates?”

“They’re like so many puppets,” answered Dixon.

“Can you vote them for Blakeley on the first, and bring them to Radburn on the second?”

“Sure.”

“Then do it. I’ve got the matter fixed with Blakeley. Morris will put him in nomination, and we’ll try to catch some of the unpledged men. On the second, vote your men for him first, and then change the vote at the last moment. Harmon will swing to him from Taylor, and your sudden switch

will give impetus to the movement. We'll start the cheering then, and in the excitement and enthusiasm others will be falling over themselves to get into the band wagon."

"Is it safe?" asked Radburn, doubtfully. "If we can nominate on the first, why not do it?"

"Safe!" cried the others. "Why, it's a 'cinch'!"

"I want the vindication of a big majority, and so do you," asserted Carroll.

"And Carroll," said Dixon, admiringly, "usually gets what he wants. He certainly has this framed up just right to put you through with such a hurrah that you'll think you're the most popular man in the district."

About the same time McHugh, Sidway, and Taylor were having a conference.

"Do you think those child-labour circulars will do any good at this late day?" asked Taylor.

"They will prepare the minds of the delegates for what is to follow," answered McHugh. "Of themselves they amount to little, but as a curtain-raiser for the big show they are sure to have an effect. They turn thoughts into the right channel.

I think, too, they will have a tendency to make some of the Radburn delegates restive."

"That's a certainty," asserted Sidway. "They serve to concentrate attention on the one thing, and the Twelfth District is not one to hold such offences lightly. I'll bet a lot of the delegates are worried right now to know how they are going to excuse themselves to their neighbours and friends for voting for such a man. They are in just the right frame of mind for us."

"But can't the circulars be answered now as well as they could have been a week or so ago?" persisted Taylor.

McHugh's brow clouded.

"I've thought of that," he said. "We're taking a chance, but I think we'll win, for I don't believe Carroll's circulars have been printed. If we had put ours out earlier he would have wanted fifty thousand of his at least, but he had to wait for us. If he had had fifty thousand printed and we had made no move, it would have been a waste of money. I think he has been waiting and watching."

"This is no holiday," suggested Taylor. "The printers are working."

For a moment McHugh remained buried in thought.

"Ballard & Co. have always done the printing for Carroll," he said, musingly. "If those circulars are being run off, Ballard & Co. are doing the job." Again he was silent for a moment. "I think I can fix it," he announced at last. "I'll meet you at the convention-hall at eleven o'clock. That will give us an hour to see that everything is in shape."

McHugh hunted up a resourceful youth of his acquaintance, to whom he gave a five-dollar bill and some instructions.

The youth hired a cab, and went to the office of Ballard & Co., but did not enter. Instead, he waited in the cab at a point where he had a good view of the entrance to the building. An hour passed, an hour and a half, and still he waited. A little after eleven o'clock a boy emerged from the building carrying a bundle with a printed sheet on the outside of it. Instantly the youth leaped from his cab.

"Is that for Mr. Carroll?" he asked.

"Yes," replied the boy.

"Give it to me quick!" ordered the youth. "I've come for it with a cab. Don't you people know that time is money with us to-day?"

"Sign this," said the boy, presenting his book.

The youth signed the first name that came into his head.

In an anteroom of the convention-hall Carroll was pacing nervously back and forth, while McHugh was waiting with equal impatience for some message. It was almost time for the convention to be called to order, and neither had heard from those circulars. McHugh was a delegate, but Carroll was not. McHugh handled his men in the hall, Carroll manipulated his from the anteroom. Both would be uneasy until some word came from the printer.

Presently a man that Carroll had sent out to a telephone returned.

"The printer says they were delivered to your messenger, who came for them in a cab," said the man.

Thereupon Carroll made some lurid remarks, for he had sent no man in a cab.

"That's McHugh," he said, finally. "Sidway never would have been up to a trick like that."

A moment later a note was handed to McHugh, and, after reading it, McHugh gave a sigh of relief and then chuckled, for the scrawl was to the following effect:

"MR. MCHUGH: — I chucked them in the sewer.

"JIM."

IX.

Developments at the convention-hall did not please Carroll. He had arrived early, in order that he might thoroughly study the situation, and almost immediately Neil Harmon had asked to be released from his second-ballot pledge.

"My people," he said, "don't like that child-labour business. We think a good deal of children over our way. We aren't particularly emotional, but we have hearts and we have children of our own. For the most part our children don't have to work, but the fact that we have them leads us to think of the fate of others, and it's going to be mighty hard to explain a vote for Radburn to some of those who sent us to this convention."

"Don't you worry about that," replied Carroll. "That campaign lie will be answered before the convention is called to order. We've got proof that everything is all right. I'm expecting stuff from the printer's that will make a roorback of this attack on Radburn."

Harmon still grumbled, but Carroll insisted upon holding him to his promise. If he didn't swing to Radburn on the second ballot, according to agreement, he would be out in the cold, for they had

enough to nominate anyway. All they asked of him was to make the majority a big enough one to fully vindicate them in the fight they had made.

Others seemed to feel much as Harmon did, and Carroll and his lieutenants were busy every minute of the time. They overlooked nothing in their efforts to hold the men in line, even producing the original age certificates as a last resort. But it was possible for only a few of the delegates to see these, and Carroll fully appreciated the instability of his position. Some there were who would be with him and his man through thick and thin, but others were unquestionably wavering. They feared to desert him, however. In his talk he was so confident of success that they felt that their political salvation depended on their loyalty to him. He always had won; why should he lose now? He always had rewarded his friends and punished his enemies; why should they run the risk of being numbered among the latter? But the reasoning did not fully satisfy. Even in victory they would have much to explain.

Under these conditions the failure to receive the expected circulars was a hard blow to Carroll; but he put a bold face on the matter. He was fighting for his political life. Up to the moment that the convention was called to order he insisted that they

were coming, and he did it with such earnestness and apparent confidence that he succeeded in securing a permanent organization that was satisfactory to him. McHugh tried hard to win this point, but he was neither disturbed nor surprised when he was unsuccessful.

"That helps some," commented Carroll. "A good deal can be done with a chairman who can be relied upon at a critical moment."

"We forced Carroll to show his full strength," was McHugh's comment, "and he has a mighty slim majority." Then he turned to one of his lieutenants and asked, "Have you seen Sidway?"

"He and Taylor are in the janitor's room at the back of the hall," was the reply. "I smuggled them in myself."

"Good," said McHugh. "When I speak, stand by the door and give Sidway the word." Then he added, with a laugh, "We may not win, but there'll be something doing before this convention adjourns."

After the permanent organization, the business of the convention proceeded without a hitch. Everything was cut and dried. All had been so completely prepared in advance that the necessary committees were appointed quickly, and were able to

report with unusual promptness. In fact, they retired for consultation only as a matter of form. There were no contests. Carroll had grounds for none, and McHugh had seen the futility of making any. He would have to win with the delegates already on the floor of the convention. He kept close watch of these, and he noted that Carroll was using every possible effort to strengthen his lines. The fact that he had succeeded in organizing the convention was used with good effect. He remained in the anteroom, but he had men on the floor to point out that this demonstrated his power and foretold his success. So well was this work done that when the time came for the nominating speeches he was reasonably confident. Many of the wavering had ceased to waver, having convinced themselves that the result was already practically settled, and that it would be folly to desert to a losing cause.

Blakeley was the first man put in nomination, but the nominating speech was a perfunctory affair. Blakeley was merely a stalking-horse for Radburn. If, for any reason, Radburn should fail at the critical moment to get the necessary votes, a serious attempt might be made to put Blakeley through, but for the moment he was only a convenience — a man for whom delegates could vote while awaiting de-

velopments. So he was nominated according to the regulation convention formula and without much enthusiasm. If he succeeded in catching a few Taylor votes on the first ballot, in addition to those that Carroll had assigned to him from the Radburn ranks, he would have served the purpose for which he was put up.

Radburn's name was the next presented, and now there was enthusiasm. The Carroll men took advantage of every opportunity for cheering. When Radburn was pictured as an ideal public-spirited citizen, they made the hall ring. When reference was made to the "vicious slanders" that had been circulated, they roared their approval. When it was explained that Radburn had at all times been ready to pay for the use he made of alley and street, if others did, and that his check was now in the hands of the proper city official, they stood on their seats and waved hats and canes.

This nominating speech was not of the ordinary kind, for the circumstances were unusual. Interwoven with the customary laudatory remarks was an ingenious reply to the charges made against the candidate. A word-picture was given of him in his home, surrounded by his own children, and mention was made of the fact that he had contributed lib-

erally to various charities that had to do with the welfare of children. Could such outrageous stories as had been circulated hurt such a man? Would any one believe them? Was it not proper — ay, imperative — that they should be refuted by a vote of confidence from his neighbours and friends — such a vote as could be given by this convention? Ought it not to be demonstrated that such disgraceful methods could not win in politics?

“It only remains for you,” said the orator, in conclusion, “to show your contempt for this audacious trickery by giving the people of your district an opportunity to vote for that conscientious, sympathetic, and successful citizen, whose name I have the honour to present to this convention.”

The cheering lasted for ten minutes, and Carroll, in the anteroom, grew more cheerful and confident as he heard it.

“As a nominating speech,” he remarked, “that is not exactly according to Hoyle, but it was needed to do the business. This isn’t the time to stand on ceremony or bother with precedent. Better a campaign speech and victory than a purely nominating speech and defeat.”

But the nomination of Taylor was even more unusual and sensational. McHugh made the speech.

Carroll had expected that Sidway would do it, but Sidway's alternate had his place, and Sidway himself was not to be seen in the hall. This fact had occasioned some speculation and uneasiness at first. In the excitement of the proceedings, however, it had been forgotten, and the appearance of McHugh on the platform, from which all the nominating speeches were made, did not worry Carroll. McHugh, the cautious and calculating politician, had permitted himself to become so thoroughly identified with the Taylor campaign that he had to stand or fall with it. Never before, according to Carroll, had McHugh acted so foolishly; but, his line of retreat being already cut off, there was nothing to be gained by keeping in the background.

McHugh began in the customary way, and it was only as he neared his peroration that sensational features began to creep in. Then he went even farther than his predecessor — not in defence, but in attack. Indeed, old-timers afterward asserted that never before had they even heard of such an extraordinary convention as this one.

"I shall present to you," said McHugh, slowly and impressively, as he neared the close, "the name of a man who has been honourable in his dealings with all — even the municipality; a man who would

not wait two or three years to pay for a street or an alley that he had appropriated; a man who would not wait to find out whether his neighbour was honest before he acted honestly himself. I shall present to you the name of a man who has not persistently violated the law; a man who has not made his money by the sweat of children's brows; a man who has not replied, when asked to carry a child-wreck on his pay-roll temporarily, that he could not afford to establish such a precedent; a man whose success is not made at the cost of the next generation; a man who does not lure parents to perjury that he may profit by the labour of their children."

This was said with such deliberate emphasis that it held the convention in a silence more telling than the enthusiasm that had preceded it. The effect was so evident that the Radburn men rallied in an effort to overcome it.

"I protest against these unfounded charges!" one man yelled.

"Point of order!" shouted another, and pandemonium followed.

The Radburn men took the cue and began shouting their protests, while the Taylor men answered with cries of "Fair play!" "Let him go on!" etc. In various parts of the hall delegates were standing

on their chairs, yelling and shaking their fists at each other; the chairman was pounding his desk with the gavel; McHugh was waving a paper over his head, while waiting for a chance to make himself heard.

"I have here," he shouted, when quiet had been partly restored, "the confessions of two women whose children work for this man!"

"This is a convention and not a court!" cried a Radburn delegate, and the storm broke again. The Taylor men were yelling for the truth, and the Radburn men were protesting against making a jury trial of the proceedings. In the midst of the confusion McHugh replaced the papers in his pocket, and that had a quieting effect. The Radburn people thought he was defeated in his purpose; but, as a matter of fact, he had made his point. None knew better than McHugh that it was no time or place to present such documents, and that under no circumstances would he be permitted to read them. He desired only to add to the force of the circulars, and this he had done in a daring and unprecedented way.

"I present for your consideration," he added, "the name of a young man too conscientious, too

honourable, too humane, to woo fortune by any of the methods I have described, — Malcolm Taylor."

Instantly the Taylor men were on their feet again, cheering; the Radburn men, their passions stirred by this extraordinary speech, began to hiss; McHugh, again violating precedent, did not retire, but stood beside the chairman, waiting.

Suddenly, with a commanding gesture, he pointed to the back of the hall.

"A product of the Radburn factory!" he cried.

Down the main aisle came Sidway, carrying a frightened, stunted, emaciated child in his arms, — a child who, even in her fright, clung to him trustingly.

The delegates climbed on chairs and each other's shoulders to see, and the effect, in view of all that had gone before, was even greater than Sidway or McHugh had anticipated. The convention had been brought to just the right point for this climax; it was as emotional as a gathering of women; it was almost hysterical in its excitement.

The Radburn men made one effort to cut off Sidway's advance and force him back, but they were not quick enough. Before they could reach him, he had been surrounded by a body-guard of other dele-

gates, and cries of indignation came from all parts of the hall.

Carroll, standing in the doorway of the anteroom, saw the danger and acted promptly. His line was broken; he would have to have time to repair the damage.

"Recognize Dixon," was the message he sent to the chairman, "and put his motion for a recess through under the gavel. We're lost if there is a vote now."

McHugh, still holding his position on the platform, saw the message delivered, and guessed its purport.

"Look at those delegates!" he said, warningly. "Before you try any trickery, call an ambulance; you'll need it!"

The chairman was white and trembling. The temper of the men before him was apparent; the convention was practically beyond his control; the Radburn men seemed to have become a small minority. But Carroll was his political master.

"Mr. Chairman! I move that we take a recess until four o'clock!" rang out the voice of Dixon.

"Second that motion!" came from another part of the hall.

"No! no! no! Ballot! ballot!" cried a score of

voices, and it seemed as if half the convention was moving toward the platform.

The chairman's knees shook and he leaned heavily on his desk for support, but he put the question. The "ayes" were many, but the "noes" came with a roar that left no room for doubt.

"Under the gavel," muttered the chairman, in an effort to keep his nerve. Then, with a pretence of confidence, he said: "The ayes seem to have it, the —"

To his startled gaze it seemed as if the convention was coming to him in a body, and the cries that greeted his ears were the cries of thoroughly angry men. They were shouting to each other to pull him from the platform, to drive him out, to stop the high-handed outrage by force; the foremost of them were already climbing to the platform.

"The noes have it!" yelled the frightened chairman. "We will now proceed to ballot."

The protests of the Radburn men were unheeded; the delegates returned to their seats; Sidway retreated up the main aisle with the child still clinging to his neck; Carroll retired to the anteroom with an oath. The thing was settled.

"Done!" muttered Carroll. "Absolutely and finally done! I'm caught with the goods, and

haven't the prestige of success to pull me through. 'What is there in it, Carroll?' is all that I get out of this campaign, and that will stick." He clenched his hands and swore. "I might as well join Wade — for awhile."

Carroll, discredited, slipping out into the street alone, heard the cheers with which the nomination of Taylor was greeted.

"Well?" said Sidway, at Settlement House, a little later.

"Oh, Allen, I'm so proud of you!" exclaimed Miss Hoyne.

"And now for our ward," he said. "It's a little late in the season for that cottage I had in mind, but don't you think a month or six weeks in the South would do her some good?"

"Who will take her?" she asked.

"It would be a nice honeymoon trip," he suggested.

She looked up quickly, and her eyes met his. Then, suddenly, he caught her in his arms. And she only murmured happily, "I'm so proud of you, Allen."

THE END.

L. C. Page and Company's Announcement List of New Fiction

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